BHAGAVAD-GITA

AN EXPOSITION

ON THE BASIS OF
PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

BY

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"The Vedic Gods as Figures of Biology",
'Yogic Asanas for Health and Vigour," Etc.

WITH FOREWORDS BY

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TO

MY PARENTS

FOREWORD

By N. D. MEHTA, B.A., Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Bombay [Author of "Hindu Eugenics," "The Evolution of the Conception of Pranava or OM", "History of Hindu Philosophy (in Gujarati,)" etc.]

The Bhagavad-Gita or "Song Celestial" is an inspired book, and occupies a unique position in the sacred literature of Hindus. Whatever may be the difference in theological opinions of various teachers of Hinduism—whether they may be Saivites or Vaishnavaites—all are agreed that the fundamental teaching of the Gita is *non sectarian.* Its eclectic nature has raised the Gita to the status of the Holy Bible of Hindus of all creeds, and the Great Teacher Sri Krishna has been recognised to be the perfect incarnation of the Divine.

Numerous commentaries have been written in Sanskrit and Vernacular languages of India, and the book has now been translated in almost all the civilised languages of the world whereby it has passed into the general stock of the human knowledge. It is no longer a book of general interest to Hindus only, but to all the branches of the human race.

An inspired book differs from a mere reasoned work inasmuch as the former has a *suggestive* value in its teaching while the latter has got only a literal value. The greater the suggestive power (Dhvani) of a poem, the higher is its æsthetic and philosophical value. The suggestive power of

words of an inspired book leads to various processes of thought culminating in a definite teaching of the interpreter. It is not necessary that the teaching deduced should coincide with the literal sense of the book or the exact teaching of the author who is a mere medium of inspiration. This method of interpretation is technically called Bhashya which conveys "new meanings, back into old texts according to one's own education and outlook." It explains the words and judgment of others as accurately and faithfully as possible and this remark applies to all commentaries, whether they may be in Sanskrit or in any other language. A real commentary or Bhashya implies an amplification of a condensed utterance or expression which is rich in meaning and significance as the great Sanskrit poet, Magha, says in his famous Kavya:—

> *Sankshiptasyapyatosyai Vakyasyartha gariyasah*
> *Suvistaratara vacho bhashyabhuta bhavantu me.**

Dr. Rele's study of the Bhagavad-Gita from the standpoint of modern psycho-analysis coupled with the ancient Indian idealistic philosophy is a valuable contribution to the exegetical literature on the Gita. Dr. Rele propounds a consistent theory that in the Gita, we have a definite solution of a problem:—How a diseased mind suffering from a division of the sub-conscious and conscious phases of an ego, like Arjuna, can be restored to its normal health by an arch psycho-analyst like Sri Krishna. The physico-psychic analysis of

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* संक्षिप्तस्याप्यतोऽस्यै वाक्यस्यार्थगरीयसः ।
सुविस्तरतरावाच्यो भाष्यभूता भवन्तु मे ॥

human mind is based on the text of 13th, 14th and 15th chapters of the Gita, where the true nature of mind (Kshetra), ego (Kshetrajna), and the Supreme Being (Purushottama) is unfolded. The author prepares the ground of interpretation of the Gita in the first two chapters of his essay wherein he describes the human mind in its two phases:—

(1) Psychical (Avyakta) and (2) Physical (Vyakta). These two phases constitute a biune called a living being or a finite embodied soul or ego. The physical aspect of the living body (Kshetra) is the mortal or Kshara Purusha whereas the psychic aspect of the living body is the relatively immortal or Akshara Purusha. The mental field which is not fully revealed to the ego has two planes—sub-conscious and conscious, the former being considerably more extensive than the latter. The light of the ego permeating through these planes is turned into subjective consciousness and the objective consciousness. The subjective and objective consciousness is an organic whole and interdependant. But the sub-conscious subjective life of the ego has a direct contact with the Cosmic Nature or Mula-Prakriti and its controlling Super-conscious light called the Absolute or Purushottama. The control of the finite ego over the two planes mentioned above indicates a normally healthy mental activity, while the disharmony between the two planes which removes the control of the finite ego leads to psychic derangement. This derangement is the result of abnormal suppression of the operations of one side of the conscious life which leads to breaches of contact between the sub-

conscious and conscious regions of the human mind. Excessive suppression of mental activity on conventional or orthodox mode of living without a diversion of the said activity on a different psychic field leads to abnormal results. The typical mind of Arjuna at the commencement of the Bharata war is a deranged mental phenomena which was brought to its normal health by the psycho-synthetic process adopted by Sri Krishna.

The essay explains how this psycho-synthetic process of healing was adopted, and the key to the teaching is to be found in the mystic apparatus called Asvattha tree allegorically described in the first four verses of chapter XV of the Gita. Dr. Rele thinks that this mystic tree is not an *outside* mundane existence, but an *inside* apparatus which we call the nervous system. The traditional interpretation of Asvattha as an external worldly life (Samsara) is, in my opinion, based on one-sided interpretation of the Vedic text on which this Smriti text is based. A reference to Mahabharata—Asvamedha Parva 47, 12-15 quoted by Sankaracharya in extenso in his Gita Bhasya on XV. i. clearly shows that the tree referred to is not the external dead world, but "the external Brahma tree existing in all living beings" (Ajivyah sarvabhutanam brahma vrikshah sanatanah). The mystic tree is, therefore, not an allegorical tree or a mere poetic fancy, but a real apparatus to be found in all living beings.

The literary associations of the Asvattha can be traced in the pre-Buddhistic Indian litera-

ture. The conception of Asvattha as an emblem of mundane existence is very old.

The primary sense of Asvattha is the well known sacred fig-tree—Ficus religiosa. It is sacred both among Hindus and Buddhists. Hindu ladies regard the tree as sacred to Vishnu, Buddhists regard it as sacred Bodhi-Vriksha under which Lord Gautama attained the spiritual illuminations. Both Hindus and Buddhists revere it as an emblem of knowledge or illumination.

In the Vedic literature which preceded Lord Buddha, the principle of life is described as if it were a growing tree. This vital tree has its permanent root in the Absolute (Brahma) from which individual beings "originate like offshoots of trees." It is a continuous rejuvenating spiritual tree which sometimes grows into offshoots and sometimes reappears in another form through seedlings. It is both Kanda-ruha, *i.e.*, reappearing in a new form through shoots as also Dhana-ruha, *i.e.*, germinating from its seedlings. The germinal element is either in the bud or in the seeds. Similarly, the Aupanishad Purusha or the Absolute Soul realised through the Upanishad is a perenially rejuvenating tree from which individual Purushas appear as mortal (Kshara) beings in the form of physically embodied souls, as also as immortal (Akshara) psychic souls. The physical soul (Kṣhara Purusha) and psychic soul (Akshara Purusha) are inter-connected; and the psychic soul contains the germs or seedlings from which new mortal frames originate. The former aspect of embodied soul is called Bhutatma (living body), while the latter is called Vidnyanatma

(psyche). The cosmic soul or Brahma is that mysterious living root from which individual souls emanate and is put forward as a puzzle by Yadnyavalkya to his opponents in the final stage of his debate (Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad III. Verses 1-7, 28). The opponents could not explain the mystery, and Yadnyavalkya at the conclusion of the debate winds up his position as under:-

> 'This root of the living person (Purusha) is nothing but the Absolute (Brahman) which is both conscious (Vidnyanam) and blissful (Anandam). It is the mortal goal of the giver (Raterdatuh Parayanam). It is also the object of realisation of the living perfect knower (Tishthamanasya tadvidah).

The fig tree which originally came out of this spiritual root (Brahman) is the first born called Prathamaja or Brahma. He is the primeval progenitor (Prajapati). He lives a long life, while the offshoots arising of him appear and disappear in various lives and births. He sees the comedies and tragedies of individual living beings, and remains as a perfect spectator of the human race in its historical evolution.

This macro-cosmic soul of Brahma has a region of his own called Brahma-Loka, wherein there is a life giving tree called Asvattha-Soma-Savanah, a fig tree yielding Soma juice for rejuvenation. (See Chhandogya. VIII. 5-3, also Kaushitaki Upanishad, where it is called Tilyovrikshah—a tree spreading germs like fine seedlings of the sesamum plant).

These fine seedlings from which new trees,

i.e., living beings originate, are under the control of the Solar Deity which is an embodiment of the cosmic life. The sesamum seeds then came to be regarded as sacred to the Sun. Asvattha later on became the epithet of the Sun. When the conceptions of the Sun and Vishnu were mixed up, Asvattha became sacred to Vishnu although it was originally associated with the Sun-God.

The great macro-cosmic soul typified by Brahma or Hiranyagarbha in the Solar orb, was represented symbolically by the Pipal tree which witnesses the ceremonial oblations to the manes. One of the three Shradhhas performed at Gaya is under this Pipal tree. In the Rig Veda X. II. 135 it is said that "under this blooming tree (Vrikshe supalashe) the Lord of Death drinks the juice of what is offered to the manes. Herein our Lord of Beings—the greatest grandfather (Pita-puranam) watches our doings". Later on it is said:—

"This is the abode of Lord of Death. It is otherwise called the temple of Gods" (Devmanam).

The above summary of the Vedic tests relating to Asvattha clearly indicates that the conception of this tree has direct connection with a living organism of the Macro-cosmic Purusha or person. When the Upanishadic teaching emphasized the identity of the microcosmic soul with the macro-cosmic spirit the sense of Asvattha was involved in mysticism. Dr. Rele's interpretation rescues the sense of Asvattha from a *mystic* or allegorical tree to that of a *real* apparatus in the form of cerebro-spinal nervous system in the human body. Dr. Rele in chapter IV of

his essay has described the various parts of this wonderful tree which coincides with the anatomical structures and physiological functions of this wonderful instrument of all human knowledge and activity. This chapter with its accompanying descriptive diagram will alone suffice to put Dr. Rele's reputation on a high level of research scholarship irrespective of his exegetical acumen in his new interpretation of the Gita.

Dr. Rele with his clear insight into the teachings of the Gita on the psycho-analytic basis gives a lucid and succinct account of the various passages which unfold a true and original interpretation of some of the verses that had long remained unintelligible. He sometimes differs radically from the traditional interpretation of the staunch followers of scholiasts like Sri Sankaracharya and others, so that, it will not be a striking feature of his elaborate work that the same as a whole may not be acceptable to them. But it must be said to his credit that he has made a unique attempt to put our own Scriptural doctrines, shrouded until now in mystery, in line with scientific theories of the modern progressive civilisation.

Students of the Gita may or may not accept this new interpretation as the meaning of the original author, but they can easily accept that what the original author wanted to be achieved by re-educating Arjuna through this spiritual dialogue by an occult process which now fits in with the psycho-analytic method of healing, scientifically established by Freudian literature.

I feel sure that the book will be read extensively and convey to European writers the right meaning of our holy scriptures that have a sound basis of physiological and psychical truths.

N. D. MEHTA

FOREWORD

By C. V. VAIDYA, M.A., LL B., Author of "History of Medieval India" "Mahabharata, a Criticism," "Epic India," "Riddle of Ramayana," "Karma-yogi-Gita" (in Marathi), etc.

I have gone through Dr. Rele's exposition of the Bhagavad-Gita from the Dhyana-yoga point of view, with intense attention and admiration. The Bhagavad-Gita is a wonderful work, treating of the most abstruse problem of philosophy in simple yet pleasing language. But the meaning is deep; and philosophical thinkers of India have from time to time written thoughtful exegetical treatises explaining its teachings from their points of view. The oldest is that of Sankaracharya who looks at the Gita as expounder of Sannyasa Yoga. Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Dnyaneshwar looked at the Gita as the expounder of Bhakti, Dasya, Pushti, and Dhyana-cum-Yoga-cum Bhakti Margas. The latest exposition is that by the late Lokamanya Tilak who looks at the Gita as expounding Karma-yoga or the path of unselfish action. It seemed as if the different aspects from which the Gita could be viewed were exhausted. But Dr. Rele's exposition brings before us yet another aspect from which the Bhagavad-Gita teachings can be viewed—an aspect based on the Yoga-philosophy of the Hindus combined with the modern psychological science of the West. Nay, it takes its support from anatomy of the human body and is thus grounded on the firm

basis of the medical science of the West, which he explains well in his work "The Mysterious Kundalini."

The Asvattha tree spoken of at the beginning of the 15th chapter of the Gita is not a mythical or allegorical one but is, Dr. Rele explains, the actual nerve tree in the human body with its roots in the brain. That the sub-conscious in man is a part of the Super-conscious and can and does communicate with it at times is again the experience of many persons and the Bhagavad-Gita, simple as it seems, shows, according to Dr. Rele's very thoughtful exposition, how the sub-conscious in man eventually merges into the all-pervading Super-conscious. The last or 18th chapter as expounded by Dr. Rele is indeed the climax of his work as it is of the Bhagavad-Gita.

The further merit of Dr. Rele's exposition is that it explains certain difficult slokas in the Bhagavad-Gita very aptly and even ingeniously. The meaning assigned to Saptarshis, to Purve-Chatvarah, to Manu, to Vaisyas and Rajarshis, to Yama, Agni, Varuna and Sasanka, to Tapa, Yajna and Dana, etc., in this psychic interpretation of the Gita is not only very ingenious but is based on the Upanishads and other ancient authorities. It would be necessary for Dr. Rele to translate the whole Bhagavad Gita in this new light and when this has been done, his work, *viz.*, this thesis and the translation would stand, I am sure, on a par with the Bhashyas of Sankara, of Ramanuja, of Madhva and of Tilak. The Bhagavad-Gita finally may have an esoteric meaning and this new interpretation is worthy of careful considera-

tion, for the gods are fond of the mystical (Paroksha-priya-iva-hi-devah*) as the Chhandogya Upanishada says. An inspired work besides its apparent meaning has also an esoteric meaning behind it and the thoughtful public will hail this work of Dr. Rele with intense delight and satisfaction.

C. V. VAIDYA

* परोक्ष प्रिया इव हि देवाः ।

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of my "Exposition of the Bhagavad Gita" was well received by the public. It evoked from all quarters of the world a number of reviews, criticisms and suggestions and if I were to print them all they would make by themselves an illuminating volume of commentary on the Gita. I have re-written several pages in the light of those criticisms and suggestions which were acceptable to me.

My only hope in publishing this new edition is that it will be received by the public with as much enthusiasm as was accorded to the first edition.

V. G. Rele

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This exposition of the Bhagavad-Gita is the outcome of a comparative study of Eastern (Hindu) and Western Psychology. After studying books on Western Psychology and Psychoanalysis, I tried to find in our ancient Sanskrit literature a book that could be compared with the modern researches into the working of the mind. Some of the Vedas and most of the Upanishads are, in my opinion, psychological treatises, but their true meaning is so overlaid with philosophical discussions, symbolical expressions and ritualistic details that their true character is not easily discoverable. This and other difficulties prevent them from being understood by the ordinary student, and we are, consequently, unable to use them, as their originators intended, as manuals of mind-training which point out the defects in the working of our consciousness and the way in which they should be remedied.

What I was looking for was a book that not only taught the theory and practice of psychology, but also indicated methods of analysing, synthesising and re-educating the mind of an individual on the border-line of mental derangement. Such a book I found in the Bhagavad-Gita, "The Song Celestial," which forms part of the Mahabharata, one of the greatest Epic poems of India. It teaches how to repair the disordered mind by bringing to light the causes of the disturbance,

thus making possible the restoration of that harmony which ought to exist between the different parts. Its object is, therefore, the same as that of the modern science of Psycho-analysis.

But though the object of the Gita is similar to that of European books on Psycho-analysis, the fundamental principle is different. Siegmund Freud of Vienna, the pioneer of present-day Psycho-analysis, bases his treatment of the disordered mind on the theory that sexual desire in some form or other is fundamental to all other desires and emotions, and that all mental disorders can be traced to that source. The defect in this conception of Psycho-analysis is that the individual is made to revolve round his emotions; his mind is not drawn away from the object of desire. By the Hindu method, on the other hand, the mind is directed to the divine qualities of the Psyche. The break in the harmonious working of the mind is shown to be due to the constant suppression of impulses coming from without, impulses alien to its divine nature; the dislocated phases of the mind are recollected and reorganised, and the unified mind is then directed to the realisation of the divine qualities of the sub-conscious. It is Psycho-synthesis rather than Psycho-analysis.

The exposition of the teachings of the Gita in the following pages may perhaps also help to solve the much debated questions as to whether the Gita is an interpolation in the Mahabharata, whether it was composed by the same author as the Mahabharata, and whether the original Gita was much shorter than the present version.

Considering the mental condition of Arjuna as depicted in the Gita, my opinion is that the Gita was preached for his special benefit, and at the most appropriate time; also that it must have been preached by one who was thoroughly acquainted with all the circumstances that had been preying on his mind before the battle. In no other way could a single discourse have been made so effective.

To understand the importance and effectiveness of the Gita, one must be acquainted with the events narrated in the earlier chapters of the Mahabharata, and then one can see that the teachings of the Gita are a natural sequence of those events. It is quite possible that some verses have been interpolated at different times by various critics to suit their particular points of view, but the number of such verses is, in my opinion, not very large—certainly I cannot agree with the extreme view of the German critic Garbe that the interpolated verses are as many as 178. According to some scholars, the original Gita consisted of fifty-eight verses distributed in different parts of the song, while others are of opinion that only verses 11 to 35 of the second chapter of the Sacred Book formed the original Gita. It would however have been quite impossible by means of such a small number of verses to establish a working harmony in the mind of a man determined to inaction-and, further, the necessary number is increased by the constant questions which he asks and insists on having answered, such questions being both symptoms of his condition and attempts to resist the treatment. I am inclined to believe,

therefore, that the Gita as we have it, with the possible exception of a few verses, is the original Gita, and that it was composed by the author of the Mahabharata.

The interpretation of the teachings of the Gita as given in this volume may also be helpful in explaining some verses which have hitherto been unintelligible. The reader must judge of this for himself.

I have in some places changed the *order* of the chapters of the Gita to suit my interpretation, but the *translation* is as nearly literal as possible.

Before I conclude, I have to thank my friend Mr. S. S. Mehta, B.A., for going through the manuscript and making various useful suggestions.

V. G. Rele

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MATERIAL
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OF THE MIND

CONSCIOUS PHASE
OF THE MIND

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ACTIONS

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SANNYASA

DHAYANA YOGA

SANNYASA

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MIND

TO ORGANS OF ACTIONS

TO ORGANS OF ACTIONS

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" " SOUND
" " TASTE
" " ODOUR
" " TOUCH

V.G.Pais.

अश्वत्थः

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥
ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ।

* * *

अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल ।
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्वा ॥
ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यम् ।
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ॥

* * *

Gita Chap. XV.

ASVATTHA

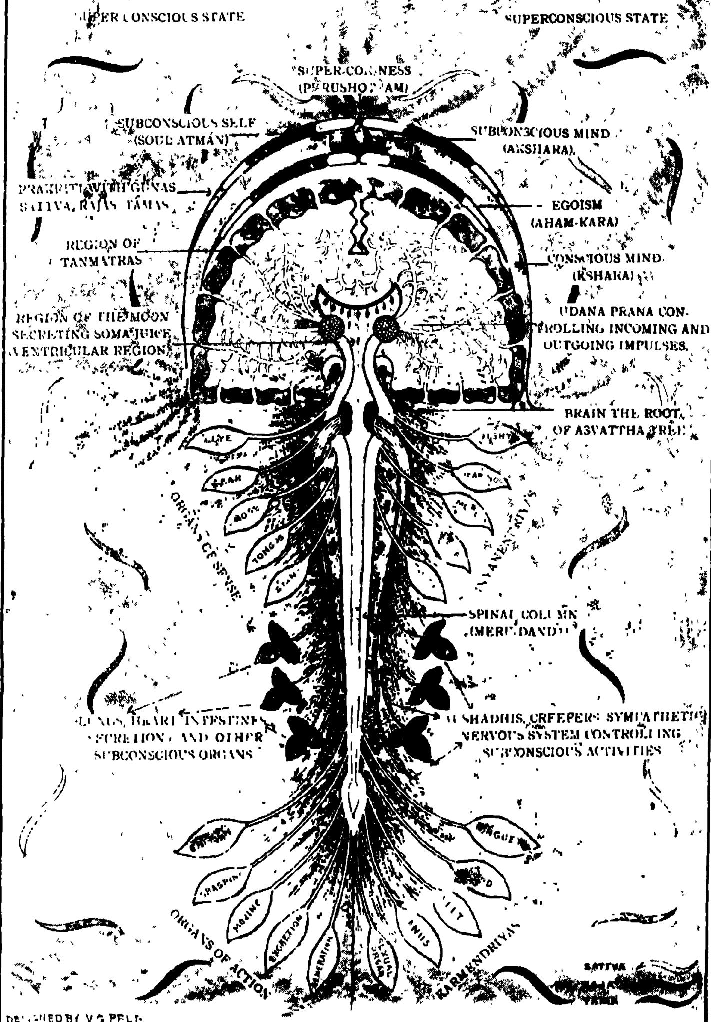
This Asvattha, with its roots above and branches below is known to be part of the organised physical body; the desires are its leaves. He who knows it (its working) knows the knowable. This Asvattha has ever been the physical manifestation of the Absolute in this world of life. It attracts towards it the senses and the mind rooted in external nature.

* * *

Having uprooted this firmly rooted Asvattha with the weapon of non-attachment that stage should be sought, from which there is no return (to this mortal existence) any more.

AŚVATTHA

Diagramatic representation of Asvattha showing Conscious (White) and Subconscious (Black) areas.





श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥

The Lord said:

O Arjuna, in such a crisis, whence has come to you this dejection, which is un-Aryan-like, which is contrary to the attainment of heaven and which is disgraceful.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

An exposition on the basis of Psycho-philosophy and Psycho-analysis.

INTRODUCTION

So many and varied are the existing introductions to, interpretations of, and discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita, that to write anything more on the subject may seem superfluous. One of the great charms of the book, however, is that the more it is read, the greater appears the possible number of interpretations of its teachings. The mirror of the Gita is so clear and untarnished that it reflects ideas from every side. The materialists find the book a perfectly practical manual of daily life and conduct, the philosopher finds it an equally clear guide to the knowledge of the Self, the man of affairs says that the sole aim of the Gita is to guide him on the path of action, while the devotional man finds that it leads him along the path of adorations till he merges himself in the Supreme.

Such universality of appeal in the teachings of a single book is unusual and leads us to ask: Had the Author all these interpretations in mind when he composed its teachings, or had he, perhaps, an interpretation of his own that included and transcended all?

However we may answer this question, the fact remains that the Gita is worthy of concentrated study from all view points, no matter how diverse.

The insight of the Author of the Gita into the functionings of the human mind is so just, so profound and so true to human experience, that his teachings bring all the various interpretations to one conclusion, *viz.*, that the goal to be reached by all is the merging of the individual self in THAT from which it emanated.

Many writers, instead of receiving into their minds the real objective teachings of the Gita in their proper moral and human surroundings, merely read their own subjective ideas into it and, consequently, find there just what they expect, thus opening the way to a good deal of criticism.

It must be admitted of course, that the teachings of the Gita existed already in the Sruti. The Gita teaches nothing new. The so-called Dvaita philosophy of the Samkhya and the Advaita philosophy of the Vedanta were preached long before the Gita was written. Wherein then, lies the special importance attached to the Gita? It lies in the fact that in the Gita all the teachings of all the then extant philosophies are synthesised to rouse one single individual from his lethargy, to remove his doubts and fears and to restore his confidence. As distinguished from the teachings of the Upanishads, which are purely theoretical, these teachings of the Gita are entirely practical; they are applied philosophy; they are applicable to our everyday existence; they guide the bewildered, quiet his agitated mind and enable him to take a saner and more practical view of the difficulties in the midst of which he is placed.

And this superiority of the Gita and of its Author is due, not to the fact that its theistic teachings are more helpful than others, nor to the particular value

of the exposition of Yoga philosophy contained therein. Such teachings are always of value to those who are above the average in their moral and spiritual outlook, but to the ordinary man they are of no value until he has been led to control of the mind by the process of analysis and reasoning, and has thereby established an harmonious connection between the conscious and the unconscious. It is in this process of reasoning and analysis that the importance of the Gita mainly lies.

Before proceeding to explain this view of mine with regard to the teachings of the Gita, two points must be explained. First—why should this mood of dejection (Vishada) have attacked Arjuna alone, and that, too, on the very field of battle, and not his brothers, including the pious Yudhishthira, who were, like himself, about to kill their kinsmen in order to regain their worldly possessions? From what we have read about the early life and great morality of Yudhishthira, this Ajatshatru (one who has no enemies), this embodiment of humility and compassion, ought to have been full of dejection and despair on the battle-field. From the previous chapters of the Mahabharata we learn that he had been so dejected, but that a word of cheer from his younger brother Arjuna, before he fell under the cloud of dejection himself, was sufficient to dispel the cloud.

The second point is, was there anything peculiar about the condition of Arjuna, when he suddenly became unnerved and depressed, that Sri Krishna should think it so worth while to discourse thus with him with a view to his relief? These questions are answered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER I

Causes, predisposing and immediate, for the dejection of Arjuna on the battlefield (Vishada-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER I

An answer to the questions raised in the previous chapter can be found in the early chapters of the Mahabharata. King Pandu, having accidentally killed a Brahmin, renounced his kingdom and retired to the forest to finish his life in penance. He left his kingdom in charge of his brother Dhritarashtra until his sons should be old enough to undertake the responsibility. But Dhritarashtra kept the kingdom for himself and his sons, refusing his nephews any share in their inheritance. From early childhood, therefore, there had been enmity between the two groups of cousins, the Pandavas (sons of Pandu) and the Dhartarashtras (sons of Dhritarashtra). Duryodhana, eldest of the latter group, was envious of the growing popularity, and also of the moral and spiritual superiority of the Pandavas, and tried to get rid of them by foul means. He tried to poison the mighty Bhima, and having failed in this attempt, he tried to kill them all by inviting them to a beautiful house built of shellac, and setting fire to it while they were inside. The Pandavas knew that the wicked and spiteful Duryodhana and his brothers were responsible for these and many other calamities that befell them, but they

kept their own counsel, expressed no indignation, and made no attempts at retaliation. Duryodhana, having failed in all attempts on their lives, asked permission of his blind father, Dhritarashtra, to challenge Yudhishthira to a game of dice. Yudhishthira, by the rules of his caste, could not refuse such a challenge, and he accepted it willingly, hoping to win back for himself and his brothers the kingdom which Dhritarashtra and his sons had usurped.

Sakuni, a clever gambler, played with Yudhishthira on behalf of his benefactor, Duryodhana, and won from him all his possessions. When Yudhishthira had nothing left to stake, the artful Sakuni suggested that, in the hope of regaining what he had lost, he should wager the persons and liberty of himself and his brothers. Yudhishthira yielded to the suggestion and lost again. As a last chance he staked Draupadi, the wife of the five brothers, and that final stake was lost also.

One can imagine the feelings of those who were watching the play, and especially of the Pandavas, who were enraged at their eldest brother's sacrifice of their persons and liberty without their consent. But as was their custom, they repressed their feelings, out of respect for their brother, who was also their king. But the repression did not last long. Draupadi was sent for by Duryodhana to take her place in the palace as his slave, and when she refused to go, Dushasana, a younger brother of Duryodhana, who had been sent to fetch her, dragged her by the hair to the assembly and began to pull off her dress, abusing her harshly all the time. Bhima, seeing her treated in this way, was grieved beyond endurance, and, turn-

ing to Yudhishthira, he gave vent to his anger in a storm of words, and even threatened to burn his brother's hands; Arjuna, too, was greatly enraged by his brother's act, but he did not allow himself to be betrayed into hasty action or words; he even persuaded Bhima to restrain himself.

Draupadi, with great cleverness, raised several legal points for the consideration of King Dhritarashtra and the assembly. She asked whether Yudhishthira had offered the stakes willingly, or whether they had been forced upon him by his opponent, whether the king was in full possession of his senses when the stakes were suggested, and lastly, whether she could legally be staked by one who had already enslaved himself, and had thus lost his right to be her master and husband. The decision was given in her favour on all points, and so she secured, not only her own freedom, but that of the Pandavas and the restoration of their possessions.

Duryodhana, seeing that his plan of securing the wealth of the Pandavas for himself had been frustrated by the decision of his father, began to poison his father's mind against his cousins with stories of their behaviour towards him. At last he persuaded his father to allow him to challenge Yudhishthira once more, the stakes being declared beforehand. They were, that the vanquished party should go, taking with them only their necessary garments, and live for twelve years in a forest, their place of abode being known to all, and that a thirteenth year should be spent by them in disguise in some inhabited country without being recognised, the

penalty of recognition being that the whole course of thirteen years should be repeated.

Dhritarashtra yielded to his son's persuasion and the Ajatsatru was again challenged. According to the Kshatriya custom he was bound to accept the challenge; he played and lost. The stake had, of course, been devised with the intention of humiliating the Pandavas, but, though they were powerful enough to fight their cousins, they refused to break the sanctions of moral and religious customs, and left the kingdom for the forest. But though they appeared unmoved, the continued oppression and insults could but make a deep impression on their minds.

Powerful and skilled in the arts of war as they were, they could easily have overcome the Dhartarashtras if they had given vent to their feelings of anger and hatred. Their cause was righteous for they would only have been taking back the inheritance their cousins had usurped. No one would have blamed them if they had done so. But, having high moral and religious standards, they repressed their natural feelings, humbled themselves before their enemies, and allowed them to have their way. This involved a tremendous amount of self-control and a consequent great accumulation of energy from suppressed feelings, in all of them, but especially in Arjuna. He was a very skilful bowman, and was also deeply learned in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Smritis, and in him the sense of morality and righteousness was more deeply implanted than in any of his brothers, except Yudhishthira. We have the authority of his brother Bhima, who relieved his own pent-up energy of repression by scolding his eldest brother, for saying that

Arjuna never sought relief in that way:—"This son of Pritha, Vivatsu (Arjuna), is the best of all bowmen. He is certainly much aggrieved, yet he lives quietly like a lion in his den. He who is able to kill all the bowmen in the world without assistance, suppresses his wrath in his breast like a great elephant." (Vana-parva : Chap. XXXV.)

In a previous life, Arjuna, had been Nara, a great sage, for in the life given of him in the Mahabharata he is represented as having passed through the stages of purely material existence and as moving slowly towards the spiritual. His temperament was, therefore, quite unlike that of Bhima, the man of action. Bhima's repression of feeling was of very short duration. He turned his repressed energy into other channels, and used it either in retaliation or in scolding Yudhishthira for having landed them in such a predicament, and, consequently his mental balance was undisturbed. Draupadi, like Bhima, released her energy in bewailing her condition, and in blaming Yudhishthira for his indiscriminating actions. The moral, pious and virtuous Dharma (Yudhishthira), knowing that the law of Karma was eternally in force, and that he had acted entirely in accordance with Kshatriya usage, never showed the slightest resentment towards his cousins and bore manfully all the taunts of Bhima and Draupadi. He knew that virtue would conquer in the end, and was patient. The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, though brave and religious, were entirely under the control of their elder brother, and so seemed indifferent to their circumstances. They were too young to assert an opinion and never allowed

themselves to be distressed by the results of the action of their eldest brother.

These five brothers may be considered as representing humanity in different stages of evolution. The pious and virtuous Dharma was living his real life in the spiritual world, and had taken a human form in order to help those to whom an objective existence was still necessary. Arjuna was still capable of being influenced by external circumstances, but controlled these according to the dictates of his conscience. The sense-impressions were striving for manifestation but the life from within was urging him to repress them. This conflict between the internal and the external put him in the position of the "Dweller on the Threshold" in Lytton's novel "Zanoni."

Bhima allowed himself to be swayed almost entirely by external impressions and acted in accordance with them. He seldom allowed his "great within" to influence his actions.

The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, received impressions from without, but translated them into activity in accordance with the wise advice of their eldest brother. They were not yet sufficiently developed to translate the impressions they received, into action on their own account.

It can easily be seen, therefore, that the mental conflict was strongest in Arjuna. Started by hatred of his cousins, because of their wickedness, it was increased during the exile by anxiety and fear lest they should be discovered by their enemies before the completion of the thirteenth year (Ajnyata-vasa). The fear and anxiety were well founded; the Pandavas

were well known to everyone in all ranks of life, and it was very difficult for them to conceal their identity, and, if they were discovered, the penalty, according to the terms of the wager, was a repetition of the term of exile in the forest (Vanavasa) and of hiding (Ajnyata-vasa) with its accompanying trials and humiliations. They might even have to repeat the cycle again and again, and then their vows of vengeance on Duryodhana and his companions would never be fulfilled and their kingdom would never be regained.

Such a combination of causes, subjective and objective, could but reduce one who was on the threshold of the spiritual life to a most abject condition of mind, far more acute than could be produced by any mere physical terror. The constant repression of the motions of anger, hatred and hostility from his early childhood had produced in Arjuna an accumulation of latent energy, and this needed to be directed to channels other than the natural ones, if the unconscious was not to be unduly affected by it. We are constantly repressing certain emotions, and this repression is necessary for our normal existence; but at the same time we are directing the energy generated by these repressions into other channels, either intellectual or physical, associated with a certain amount of pleasure or excitement and so we are none the worse for the repression.

Arjuna, in his strenuous endeavour to learn the art of a bowman from his great teachers Indra and Mahadeva, had forgotten these emotions entirely and the energy generated by their repression had gathered tremendous force, which he could not direct to a

suitable outlet, because, it was never in his consciousness. He was perfectly normal with regard to his other ideas and thoughts during this period of repression, but the pent-up energy was still there when at last, the period of exile safely over, he went to the battlefield, enthusiastic, full of the hope of victory and of regaining his kingdom. When he found himself face to face with his enemies the whole force of the repressed hatred and anger was released. He could not adequately direct this liberated energy into action, because his conscience intervened, putting before him the fear of committing sin by killing his cousins and other kinsmen. Thus the repressed energy, on its way to manifestation in a conscious act, was checked halfway, and ultimately assumed a form in emotions which were the exact opposite of its original cause. This was a waste of psychic energy and was harmful to him.

Such a partial discharge of pent-up energy produces that physical and mental disability which goes by the name of psycho-neurosis or functional disease of the mind. Its physical symptoms manifest themselves in tremors, sweating, nausea, cardiac pain and palpitation and its mental disability is accompanied by the inability to collect thoughts, difficulty in pulling together and a sense of confusion and embarrassment.

Arjuna's accumulated repulsion and hatred towards the sons of Dhritarashtra were unconsciously replaced by emotion of fear and grief. When he was brought face to face with his wicked and wily cousins on the field of battle, a mood of dejection overtook

him and his bow—Gandiva—fell from his hand. He could not be roused to take up his bow even though his Master held before him the bait of wealth and fame that he would achieve by engaging himself in the battle; nor was he amenable to scolding, nor to the humiliations he would be subjected to, if he fled away from the field. Was this the result of nobility or the deranged condition of his mind that he started with a refusal to fight his kinsmen, to enjoy "blood besmeared sovereignty even of the three worlds?" Whatever may be the reason his physical condition on the battlefield that made him incapable of fighting, he himself describes his incapacity as follows:—"My limbs fail, my mouth is parched, my body quivers; my hair stand on end, Gandiva slips from my hand, my skin burns all over; I am not able to stand and my mind is whirling." In spite of his being an invincible warrior, Arjuna was absolutely incapacitated and that was why Sri Krishna had actually to pull him up by saying "Yield not to impotence, O Partha! It does not befit thee."

No individual with a normal mind would allow such a condition to be manifested in his physical body. The infirmity of his noble mind was at fault. His mental mechanism was disturbed, but not destroyed, by the sudden discharge of pent-up energy. It refused to answer his consciousness, and he became unable to fight.

Arjuna's inability to fight cannot be ascribed to any fault or blamable weakness in him or indeed to any subjective cause. If it had been so, he would

not have been able to route the same army as then confronted him, when, on another occasion, with a totally different motive, he rescued the cattle of Virat from the hands of Duryodhana and his party. On that occasion the weakness and timidity of Prince Uttara, who boasted too much, and became nervous when he saw the mighty army of the Kauravas, stirred Arjuna to even greater activity than usual. Arjuna's weakness proceeded quite rightly and legitimately from valid and sufficient objective causes.

If this analysis of Arjuna's behaviour on the battlefield be acceptable, it is but right to elucidate the verses of the Gita in this light alone so as to make them appear in their proper perspective. We shall have to break the tradition and put a new interpretation on some of the words in the Gita without going out of the way to give new meanings to them.

The Acharyas of old in their most learned and illuminating commentaries on the Gita have not accepted this analysis as the main basis for elucidating the teachings of the Gita and thus have brought their own subjectiveness to bear on it; to bring about Sannyasa, Dasya, Bhakti, Mukti as the prominent results of its teachings—results which are in themselves dependent on the varying degrees of higher synthesis of mind—"the Spiritual Psycho-Synthesis."

This spiritual synthesis they tried to expound without any reference to the structure of the body. This was because they were not conversant with the anatomy and internal working of the body. They achieved their end by observing the working of the

universe visible outside and drawing deductions there from. Had they the knowledge of the construction and working of the structure of the body that connects the mind with the physical form they would have put a different interpretation on the word 'Asvattha' occurring in the 1st verse of the 15th chapter of the Gita.

We shall see later on, by what process of analysis, synthesis and re-education Bhagavan (Lord) Shri Krishna re-established the broken connection between the conscious and the unconscious, so that his disciple could say "I have regained my memory through Thy grace, Oh immutable One! my doubts are all dissolved away, I will act according to Thy word." (Chap. XVIII. 72.)

A very good parallel to the case of Arjuna can be found in what is a common occurrence in everyday life—a student of average intelligence, but with inadequate means of subsistence, going up for a university examination. He is fully aware that his future prosperity depends on the result of the examination and, consequently feelings of doubt and anxiety have been making impressions on his mind though the feelings have been repressed during the progress of his studies. The energy accumulated by this repression lies dormant in him till it is released by the approach of the day of the examination. This liberated energy, if not utilised by the conscious mind and directed along its proper channels, displaces his feelings of anxiety with the emotion of fear and its associated physical symptoms, and sometimes so unnerves him

that he refuses to appear for the examination. It is not fear of the examiners or of the examination hall. If there were nothing depending on the results of the examination he would be able to satisfy the examiner in all the questions he might be asked in the very hall which he now refuses to enter. It is not subjective causes that are at work to make him nervous. Objective causes, his surroundings of misery, poverty and anxiety, have formed a web round the unconscious, and when the force of circumstances causes the unconscious to break through that web and endeavour to reach the conscious, the force is spent halfway and is manifested in the form of fear. A word of cheer, good advice and sound reasoning will probably help him to restore his mental harmony, and he will appear for the examination and probably succeed. A student above the average, or one who is in good circumstances, will not be affected in this way, neither will one who is below the average.

I should, therefore, place the behaviour of such a student in the same category as that of Arjuna. The immediate cause at work in both causes is fear with its associated physical symptoms. The predisposing causes vary according to social status and surroundings, with anxiety as their basis. Both are suffering from Psycho-neurosis, a functional disease of the mind.

CHAPTER II

Mind—its aspects and their working.
(Kshetra-kshetrajnya-vibhaga-yoga, Guna-traya-vibhaga-yoga).

GITA CHAPTERS XIII & XIV

In order to understand what is meant by mental disease, we must first define the term "Mind". The usual dictionary definition does not help us. According to Aristotle, mind is the sum total of the functions of the organism when in a living condition. Mental illness, then, would be the disorder of any of the functions of the whole body, whether of memory, perception, emotion, desire or action. If anything goes wrong with the actions of the body, either the abstract ones, such as thinking or remembering, or the manifest ones, such as speaking or walking, it becomes difficult for the person so affected to make normal adjustments to his social and other surroundings and also to his own interior condition.

A perfect definition of mind is impossible. The Author of the Gita, in describing the composition of the body, calls it "Ekam" (the one). According to him the body is composed of "the great elements, the Ego (Ahamkara), the conscious (Buddhi), the unconscious (Avyakta), the ten senses, the one (mind), the five objects of the senses, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the body, intelligence and fortitude. These, briefly described, constitute the field (Kshetra) and its evolutes." (XIII, 6, 7).

From this description it is evident that the body is composed of mental and physical fields. The mental field consists of the Ego and the objective and subjective aspects of mind, while the physical field consists of the five organs of sense—skin, eyes, ears, nose and tongue, which give us respectively the knowledge of touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste; the five organs of action—tongue, hands, feet, sexual organs and anus, with their respective functions of speech, grasping, movement, generation and excretion; and the five finer feelings or perceptions which go by the name of Tanmatras. The Tanmatras bear a relation to both the subjective and the objective aspects of the mind, but the organs of action, in relation to the subjective aspect of the mind, are all sub-conscious activities which carry on the functions of retention, absorption, circulation, secretion and ejection. Everything contained in the physical field exists only by virtue of the ONE, the mind, which is active while the body lives. To know the various functions of the mind there must be a knower, who is conscious of all the visible and invisible activities of the mind. He must have the attribute of awareness, without which the activities of the mind cannot be known or felt. What is it in us that is conscious of the activites of the mental field? If this consciousness is located in the brain, it must occupy space, like all material things. Modern physiologists suppose that consciousness is a physico-chemical substance lying dormant in the cortex of the brain until it is stimulated into activity by contact with the great Cosmic Energy, but it is impossible for them to verify this statement while the body is alive, and when the body is dead the substance is not found. Most

books on psychology, however, ignore altogether the one who is aware of the activities of the mind, and deal only with thoughts, emotions and acts of the will, that is, with its visible manifestations.

Some psychologists (mostly Eastern), on the other hand, state that the knower is the Ego, residing in the human body, which it leaves at death, and is not demonstrable by science. This is the fundamental difference between the metaphysical psychology of the Shastras and the present-day psychology of the West.

This Ego (Kshetrajna) or Soul sees, watches and feels the various activities of the subjective mind and its attributes (Avyakta) and also of the objective mind (Buddhi) and its attributes (Ahamkara), which are collectively called the "mind." In the metaphysical teachings of the Gita, this condition of "awareness" of the various activities of the mind in the physical field is shown to have three aspects—objective, subjective and super-subjective or absolute. The Ego in its super-subjective or absolute aspect discerns its relationship with the universe; this relationship of the universe with the absolute is the object to be known (Jneyam), and the knowledge is immortality, for the Absolute is the supreme Brahma, having no beginning, who is neither being nor non-being (XIII. 3). In its subjective aspect the Ego knows what is taking place within itself, that is, in the vast field of individuality. This knowledge is called Wisdom (Adhyatma-Jnyana). In its objective aspect the Ego knows what is taking place in the immediate external world and obtains Adhi-bhautic knowledge. It is this aspect of the Ego that knows facts, and reasons in the immediate present, and governs all the voluntary actions of the body.

The Ego in its absolute aspect works in the field of the super-conscious; in its subjective aspect it works in that of the sub-conscious; while in its objective aspect it occupies the field of the conscious (Ahamkara) and becomes the living soul in the world of life. In this aspect it uses, as its agent for gaining knowledge, the mind together with the five subtle organs of sense which abide in Nature (Prakriti), the original source of the material world, possessing the essential qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (XV. 7).

It is the subjective aspect of the Ego that rules over the real interior action, that is, all the involuntary actions of the mind. This aspect is the cause of change and growth. Unless change takes place in the sub-conscious there is no change in the conscious. "The objective mind cannot produce any change in the personality by itself, the two aspects are co-relative; the conscious mind acts, the sub-conscious re-acts; the conscious mind produces impressions, the sub-conscious, expressions; the objective or conscious determines what is to be done, the subjective or sub-conscious supplies the mental material and the necessary power. Everything that is expressed through personality was impressed on the sub-conscious by the conscious. and since the conscious mind can impress anything on the sub-conscious, any desired expression may be obtained. The sub-conscious is the soil; every conscious act is a seed sown, that will bear fruit after its kind if properly watered by intensity of feeling." If we impress the sub-conscious with emotions of fear, anger, hatred or anything else, good or bad the like will grow in the fields of the sub-conscious in due course of time and under appropriate conditions, the

essential condition being depth of feeling. It is in this way that man is affected by his environment.

The sub-conscious is the "Great Within" which is eternal. It absorbs good and bad impressions and discharges its life force at the right moment for the benefit or destruction of the personality. It comes into the body at birth as a spark from the Super-conscious. "It is seated equally in all beings, the Supreme Lord, unperishing within the perishing" (XIII. 28). "It is the same in being and yet seated distributively. THAT is to be known as the supporter of beings. He devours and he generates" (XIII. 17). The objective consciousness is the result of our impressions from without, which begin to play their part at birth, and come to an end with the death of the physical body. The subjective consciousness is continuous, passing on from one incarnation to another, it never dies; it is the embodied soul described in the Vedanta, containing impressions of the past and accumulations of the present which must be eliminated in the future. It is the Purusha of the Samkhya philosophy.

These two aspects of the mind are the two beings mentioned in the Gita (XV. 16). The transient, which exists in all created beings during their physical life, is the objective mind, and the intransient, uncreate, is the subjective mind, which comes to every individual as a part of the universal consciousness. This is the basis of the Advaita philosophy.

The Super-conscious, the highest energy which sustains the three worlds Svarga, Patala and Prithvi, is the Indestructible Lord. Since it excels the destructible, which is the objective or conscious, and is even

more excellent than the indestructible sub-conscious, it is proclaimed in the world and in the Vedas as the Purushottama, that is the Supreme Spirit (XV. 17, 18.)

In proper, healthy and normal conditions of life the objective and subjective minds act in perfect harmony with each other, and healthy, happy conditions prevail. But unfortunately these two minds are not always destined to work in perfect harmony, and the result is mental disturbance, physical wrong-doing, and functional and organic diseases.

That man has two minds is proved by the fact that while the conscious mind sleeps under the influence of an anaesthetic and all voluntary activity is stopped, the sub-conscious is nevertheless still alive, receptive to ideas and readily responsive to suggestions. The sub-conscious activities such as the beating of the heart, respiration and the movement of the intestines, go on undisturbed even though the man be completely under the influence of the anaesthetic. The sub-conscious mind can never become unconscious. If it were poisoned by the anaesthetic or in other way, all the functions of the body would cease and death would immediately follow. To understand this duality of the Mind, one has only to recall what a hypnotist can do with a subject who is under his influence. His suggestions bring about for a time the suspension of the functioning of the conscious or reasoning mind, while the sub-conscious continues to be active and energetic. When the subject is in this condition he will do, at the suggestions of the operator, many foolish things which he would not normally do if his objective mind were active.

CHAPTER III

The attributes of the sub-conscious and of the conscious regions of the mind, and their modifications in individuals.

(*Daiva-asura-samput-vibhaga-yoga*).

GITA CHAPTER XVI

In the metaphysical teachings of the Gita, the conscious and the sub-conscious regions of the mind are considered as being endowed with certain inherent qualities. The qualities of the sub-conscious are fearlessness, purity of life, perseverance in gaining knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of the Vedas, austerity or asceticism, sincerity, harmlessness, truthfulness, freedom from anger, generosity, tranquillity, absence of cunning, compassion to all, gentleness, modesty and steadfastness (XVI. 1, 2, 3). These qualities are the wisdom (Jnyana) which the sub-conscious produces for the contemplation of the conscious.

This attribution of divine qualities to the sub-conscious marks an important difference between the metaphysical psychology of the East and the materialistic psychology of the West. The method of the psycho-analyst is to bring the pent-up energy of repressed emotions out of the sub-conscious into the conscious, there to be given physical manifestation. This keeps the patient bound to the objects of desire,

and the chances are all in favour of a recurrence of the disordered mental state. The cure is not permanent. By the metaphysical method, the energy is directed to the gaining of the wisdom of the embodied sub-conscious, and as this is allied to the Superconscious the individual comes into true relationship with the Universal Soul; he forgets entirely the material world and becomes in tune with the Infinite. No lapses from this state are possible, the cure is permanent.

Those qualities of the human mind which are not divine in nature fall within the domain of the objective consciousness and are considered to be born of ignorance. These qualities are the result of the desires which arise from too great attention to the impressions produced on the conscious mind by the organs of sense. In this way arise hypocrisy, vanity, self-conceit, cruelty and lack of wisdom; these and other impure motives prompt the individual to wrong action (XVI. 10) These properties of the objective mind, being in their nature opposite to the divine qualities are described as demoniacal (Asuric—not divine). Persons possessed of these qualities take the Visible for the Real and think that man's desire is the cause of the universe; being too much occupied with the satisfaction of the desires produced by external objects, they do not believe in any unseen cause, nor do they understand that everything in the universe is ruled by law. "Thus deluded by ignorance, tossed about by conflicting thoughts, surrounded by a web of delusion and attached to the enjoyment of objects of desire, they fall into a hell of impurity" (XVI. 16).

When once these ideas—that the world is devoid of truth, of fixed principles and of a ruler, and that the sole aim of the universe is the satisfaction of human desire—have become firmly fixed in the objective consciousness, the means of communicating with the sub-conscious, through which alone the super-conscious can be reached, are thus closed to him and he is left untouched by the influence of its divine qualities.

But, it may be asked, if the embodied subjective consciousness has all the divine attributes and is the same in everyone, why are some men inclined to evil and some to good? Why should this consciousness be embodied in men who, because of their heredity, are destined to evil? To explain this, the Author of the Gita takes us to the source from which the sub-conscious emanates, according to the Samkhya philosophy. Of all the six schools of Hindu philosophy, this system, founded by the great sage Kapila, appeals most to the scientific mind, and its teachings are entirely in accordance with the conclusions of modern science. The teaching resolves itself into five great principles. First—that the universe is created from eternal cosmic matter (Prakriti), and is an evolution from the unmanifest to the manifest. Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (spirit) are both without beginning, and all material forms, with their qualities, are born of matter. So long as spirit and matter are separated, manifestation does not take place; a combination of the two is necessary for manifestation. Though spirit joins with matter to produce manifestation, it does not of itself produce any material thing. What is produced by spirit is the

feeling or realisation of pleasure or pain arising from material causes. Any object, mobile or immobile, which impresses itself on our consciousness, is the product of union between the body (Kshetra-Vyakta) and the spirit (Kshetrajna-Avyakta), *i.e.*, the field and the knower of the field (XIII. 27). Cosmic matter (Mula-prakriti) is endowed with three qualities, Spiritual (Sattvic), Material (Rajasic) and Wayward (Tamasic), and these three qualities are equally balanced in the Prakriti. The first of these qualities is concerned with the enlightenment of the mind through knowledge of the Eternal. The second produces craving for an attachment to objects, whether material or spiritual and binds the spirit with the bond of action. The third produces a state of indifference, carnality and inactivity, which deludes the spirit and binds it with the bonds of time and apathy.

As individuals pass from life to life the balance of these three qualities is disturbed, and one or the other predominates; so when Purusha joins with Prakriti to produce new births it attaches itself to the predominant quality, and men are born accordingly "in good or evil wombs" (XIII. 22). That portion of Mula-prakriti which is joined with Purusha to produce the body is the Vyakta; while the embodied spirit the sub-conscious self which is "imperishable within the perishable" is the Avyakta.

This account of the sub-conscious with its attached qualities prepares the way for the second great principle, which is that every manifestation must have a visible or invisible cause. It does not arise out of nothing. All the actions of an individual, both mental and physical, have their origin

in the impressions which the sub-conscious has received in the present or in past lives. All impressions made on the sub-conscious, whether good, bad or indifferent, will produce thoughts corresponding to those impressions, and these thoughts will pass on to the objective mind (Buddhi) to produce conditions in the personality similar to themselves.

The third principle is a corollary to the second: The effect lies in the cause. The man is said to be a reflection of his thought, that is, the body with its mental and physical fields, is fashioned according to his thought. Our divine or brutish qualities are the effects of the impressions of our good or bad thoughts on the sub-conscious.

As a corollary to this third principle we have the fourth: The breaking up of the effects causes the unmanifest in the body (the subjective consciousness) to come into prominence. If we control thought and its manifestations, if, that is, we prevent all physical and mental manifestations, the creative power of the sub-conscious, which is produced by impressions, is destroyed. There being nothing left from past or present lives to produce effects, the sub-conscious returns to consciousness with all its original divine qualities, and makes itself manifest or comes into existence again.

The first three laws of reasoning are based on the supposition that all is mind, and that mind works from within outward. It seems futile to deny the existence of matter with its form and shape; nevertheless, the persistent attempt to realise that matter apart from mind does *not* exist, tends to eliminate the

consciousness of shape and form and the limitations with which they are associated.

The supposition that there exists a perfect uniformity in the working of these laws forms the fifth postulate of the philosophy of Samkhya.

This knowledge of the working of the mind in its two aspects (conscious and sub-conscious) is the wisdom (Jnyana) which a man should gain. Having attained this wisdom, he should try to bring into his consciousness all the qualities of the sub-conscious, which is the object to be known (Jnyeyam). In this way he establishes a connection with the super-conscious, the Supreme Spirit (Jnyanagamya), the light of all lights which is beyond darkness (XIII. 18).

He who is aware of these conditions of the working of the mental field is the Ego, the Kshetri in the field. He alone illuminates the whole body as the Sun illuminates the whole earth (XIII. 34.)

The mental field is outside the physical body and comes into existence when the body is illuminated by the Ego, that is, when the body becomes active after birth. The way in which the Ego tries to reach the mental field through the physical body is therefore the next point to be explained. When that is clear, the theory of psychology as given in the Gita--the Jnyana Yoga—is complete.

CHAPTER IV

The mental field reached through Asvattha in the physical body. *(Purushottama-yoga)*

GITA CHAPTER XV

So learned, yet strange, is the interpretation put upon the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Gita, and so persistent are the critics in adhering to that interpretation, that I feel some diffidence in putting forward an entirely different one. Yet, to understand the teachings of the Gita on the basis already suggested, it is necessary to interpret this verse in an entirely new way, but without any alteration in its construction.

Asvattha, according to the traditional interpretation, is said, metaphorically, to be an imaginary tree representing worldly life (Samsara), that is imperishable. I doubt if the Author of the Gita had this interpretation in mind when he preached his famous sermon to Arjuna. The traditional interpretation bears no physical relation to the mind and to imagine it, in its abstract conception with roots above and branches below, is beyond the imagination of the average individual. The mystery about Asvattha is still more heightened by representing it to be imperishable in contrast to perishable as the root-meaning

of it suggests it to be. The real key to the proper interpretation of this verse, from the view-point of psycho-philosophy depends on the meaning we assign to the term "Avyayam." In suggesting a new interpration for this word, I believe that the traditional interpretations do not suit the text, the occasion, the person involved nor the theme which will have to be considered against the background of the physical and psycho logical aspects and not merely from strained metaphorical or spiritual aspects as has been done in all the explanations handed down by tradition.

For centuries past we have accepted "imperishable" as the meaning assigned to "Avyayam" without attempting to seek other possible interpretations that could be put on it. Among its other meanings, particularly in Vedanta, as given by Apte and Monier-Williams in their lexicons, the most striking one is "a member or corporeal part of the organised body." One is likely to confound this meaning of Avyaya (अव्यय) with Avayava (अवयव) Avyaya is that part of the body which is inseparably connected with the body and is essential to its living, like the heart, the lungs and the brain and the systems they represent, etc. while Avayava is that which could be separated from the body and is not essential to its existence, like the limbs, ear, eyes, etc.

With this meaning of the word "Avyaya," the mystical opening stanza of the 15th chapter of the Gita becomes easy of interpretation. Accepting this meaning, the translation will be: "Asvattha with roots above and branches below is said to be a corporeal part of the organised body (Avyayam); desires

(not Veda) are its leaves (Chhandamsi-yasya-parnani). He who understands its working knows the knowable, the object to be known." In the light of this new interpretation the question naturally arises: what part of the body does it represent "to know the knowable" and from which all desires spring? It is the nervous system in the body, which is compared to the tree Asvattha, having its roots above in the brain (Urdhva-Mula).

It has been proved by experimental science and pathology that there are certain areas in the brain, more particularly the frontal lobe, the stimulation or extirpation of which produces very little result. A distinctive feature of the human brain is the large size of these silent or latent areas, and it has therefore been supposed that these areas are the seats of the higher intellectual centres and that they retain memories of previous impressions and form organs of thought to produce desires.

The trunk of the tree is the spinal cord, which descends through the spinal column; its branches, in the form of big nerves (Sakhas), spread upwards and downwards in the body. These branches are nourished by nerve fibres (Guna) which have organic functions; and these are again nourished by finer nerve buds or terminals (Pravalah) that receive impressions from surrounding objects, and are intertwined below (Adhah), that is on the skin of the human organism, which organism is the result of past lives (XV. 1, 2). It is perishable like Asvattha as it refuses to function when the body dies.

In this interpretation I am not suggesting any-

thing out of the way nor am I suggesting any new interpretation of the word "Avyayam" though, at first sight, it may appear to be so as we are prone to give more weight to anything that is old.

The corresponding passage of the Asvattha metaphor of the Gita is to be found in Atharva-Veda* where sublime aspect of the tree is depicted as ever-existing Brahma. The same tree, without naming it as Asvattha, in its mundane aspect, is mentioned in the Mundaka and the Swetaswatara Upanishads,† where two birds, as friends, dwell upon one and the same tree, one of them enjoys the sweet fruit of the Pipal tree, and the other, not eating, watches as a witness. These two allegorical birds, according to the Vedanti, represent two aspects of the mind Jiva (objective consciousness) and Shiva (subjective consciousness). What that tree is, on which the birds dwell ever united, is mentioned in the Gita in its physical aspect as Asvattha—the nervous system of the body. The whole of the 15th chapter of the Gita is descriptive of the abstract functions of the nervous system, the knowledge and working of which was highly essential to Arjuna to understand the introspective teachings of the Gita.

This Asvattha tree has always been recognised as the physical manifestation of the Absolute in the world of life, and attracts towards itself impressions

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* ऊर्ध्वमूलमवाक् शाख एकोऽश्वत्थः सनातनः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदेवामृतमुच्यते ॥

† द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

of surrounding objects gained by the roving senses and the mind.

The tree itself does not know its own beginning or end, or the value of its qualities. It is only by making this Asvattha non-impressionable to surrounding objects that the mental field is reached and the connection made between the sub-conscious and the Super-conscious—the Supreme Spirit. Once that connection is made, man no longer desires the fruits of the physical field.

The mind inhabits the borderland between the mental and physical fields, and is the medium by which physical impressions are carried to the objective and thence to the subjective. When the Asvattha is destroyed, that is made non-impressionable, there is nothing left for the mind to carry from the physical to the objective consciousness and thence to the subjective, and consequently nothing which the Ego can use to create consciousness in these two aspects. The activities of the mind being thus at an end, no more impressions of any kind are made either upon the subjective or the objective consciousness. The objective consciousness, which came into existence at birth, receiving no more impressions from the physical field, becomes inactive. The subjective consciousness, receiving nothing more from the objective, generates no new actions (Kriyamana-Karma) but continues to rule in the mental field with its experiences of the past unobstructed, and it also continues to stimulate the involuntary actions of the body and so keep it alive. It is this subjective or sub-conscious mind that permeates the soil, that is, the body (Gamavisya),

and supports it with its vital energy. It is the seat of memory, perception and judgment. The activity of the sub-conscious is kept up by the fluid (Soma) secreted by the moon; this fluid nourishes all the "herbs," that is the different parts of the autonomic nervous system, those parts which control the vital organs of the body and their activities, the beating of the heart, respiration, the movement of the intestines, and the various digestive and other processes. Though there may be no visible activity of the body, yet these sub-conscious activities will keep the body alive (XV. 13, 14).

The mention of the herbs, as well as of the Asvattha tree, seems to show that the author of the Gita was acquainted with the independent autonomic nervous system, as well as with the cerebro-spinal one. The nerves of the autonomic system form independent nerve units, having their own centres or roots in the brain. Their function is to supply energy to those organs of the body which carry on the vital functions of circulation, respiration, etc., without which the body cannot live. These independent nerve units are maintained. (even when all other bodily activities which are controlled by the Asvattha tree, the cerebro-spinal nervous system are in abeyance) by the rhythmic falling on these centres of the secretion of the moon, that is of the moon-shaped ventricles of the brain.

The author of the Gita therefore, says that all who desire to obtain final emancipation must first try to gain knowledge of the Embodied Self (Saguna-Brahma). The creative energy of this Self must then

be directed to the realisation of the Absolute. The gaining of this realisation puts an end to the embodied sub-consciousness with all the impressions that have been made upon it in past lives.

To gain this consciousness of the sub-conscious that is embodied in us, we must control the energies of the Asvattha (the cerebro-spinal nervous system) that is, all voluntary attempts to satisfy desires. This is only possible to those who are without egoism and delusion, who have overcome all attractions to evil, who dwell constantly in the Self, whose desires are subdued, and who are liberated from the pairs of opposites, such as pleasure and pain.

CHAPTER V

Educating the mind by metaphysical knowledge (Samkhya-marga.)

GITA CHAPTER II

From what has been said about the Embodied Super-conscious self, it can be seen that it is a tremendous power in the body, which can be made use of either to liberate oneself from the cycle of rebirths or to bind oneself to the objects of desire. The inherent qualities of the sub-conscious are divine in nature, and to live in the consciousness of these divine qualities is the birthright of every individual but, unfortunately, the organs of sense are so powerful that they make us forgetful of our birthright and bind us to the objects of sense for the gratification of our desires. When the mind begins to act in the consciousness of divine qualities it will express them in the personality, and there will be left no room for those qualities which are the outcome of the senses —anger, hatred, malice and hostility—qualities which are demoniacal, that is, not divine. To awaken this divine consciousness and bring it to the forefront of the mind, to remind us of its qualities and to free us from the web of impressions gathered in past and present lives, is the aim of the teachings of the Gita.

Everyone is not capable of the task of arousing that divine consciousness in others; it can only be done

by one who understands perfectly the working of the three aspects of the mind and who is above all consciousness. There could be no better person to awake that consciousness than the Divine Krishna in human form.

Arjuna and Sri Krishna had been in a previous life Nara and Narayan, and so Lord Krishna knew the short-comings of Arjuna in that past life. He knew him thoroughly also in his present life, knew his character and mental capacities, his habits and the causes of his grief and propensity to inaction.

Arjuna had in Lord Krishna the best of psycho-analysts, one who was able to clear his mind of all the elements of fear and grief by re-establishing the broken harmony between his conscious and sub-conscious states. That break had been brought about by the energy of his repressed emotions of hostility to his cousins; Sri Krishna directed that repressed energy into its proper channels of action.

We have now to consider the methods adopted by Lord Krishna to restore Arjuna to his former mental condition. The liberated energy of Arjuna's subjective consciousness had not taken the channel it should normally have done, and was manifesting itself in inaction and grief, with associated physical symptoms. To direct that energy into its rightful channel, Sri Krishna, assuming that the dejection and consequent inaction were temporary, tried by scolding and persuasion to make him realise the sin he would incur by not carrying on war in a righteous cause. He tried to humiliate him by presenting to his mind the shame and dishonour that would be

associated with his name, showing him that his inaction on the battlefield would be attributed to fear, and that those who had previously respected him for his power and skill in wielding the bow would begin to belittle him. He also reminded him of what he would gain if he fought successfully. But Arjuna would not listen. This was not all. The worst part of the tragedy was Arjuna's defending his refusal to fight, before his Master, showing thereby that though his mind was deranged in one particular direction yet it was normal in other respects so as to invent excuses for his inaction—excuses which he could bethought of before facing the battle. Arjuna's philosophical talk in verses 32 to 46 of Chapter I of the Gita about the evils that might accrue from his taking part in the battle are nothing but rationalisations, *i.e.*, reasons given by an individual for his conduct that are in reality not reasons at all but excuses or justifications that are frequently thought of after the event. This is almost an everyday occurrence with us. We do offer to ourselves or to others astonishing excuses for neglecting our duties or some piece of work that may be entrusted to us. Unhappiness and depression overcame Arjuna first, and in his desperate attempt to find relevant reasons for them he invented delusions for his inaction.

Sri Krishna was quick enough to see this and hurled back a retort in the memorable lines, "Thou grievest for those that should not be grieved for yet thou speakest words of wisdom." (II-11). He realised that the homogeneity of his mind, necessary for the harmony of actions, both mental and physical,

was broken at the sight of his cousins into compartments to act independently of each other. There was a conflict between his ego and ego-ideal. His conscious physical mind, without the guiding force of his sub-conscious or intellectual mind, acted waywardly under a stimulus from without; while the intellectual mind without the control of the conscious or reasoning mind blurted out excuses. Sri Krishna knew that the spiritual nature of the man contains the seed of all conflicts and requires a broader, higher, and more comprehensive method. He therefore tried to re-educate his mind by metaphysical and psychic methods.

The difference between his methods and the method of the modern psycho-analyst lies in the fact that his metaphysical process directed the energy generated by the repressed emotions towards the realisation of the Real and to the conviction that all things are in themselves good and are working together for some greater good; whereas the modern method brings the energy to the surface in order that it may be used for gaining the desired object or diverted into other channels, intellectual or physical, so as to unburden the sub conscious mind.

The symptoms of the patient indicate the point at which the rebuilding or re-educating process should begin. At first he resists all attempts to ascertain those symptoms, but the personal influence of the physician gradually breaks down this resistance and the repressed emotions and repressed activity are brought to light, their true nature is exposed, and solutions and re-adjustments are suggested.

A change is often noticed in the attitude of the patient as the re-education proceeds—the emotions and ideas that were formerly associated with various objects are transferred to the physician, that is, the repressed psychic energy invents ideas and actions which enable the emotions to be liberated upon a person other than the one originally causing them. The physician is then able to re-transfer the suppressed emotions to legitimate objects and the conflict caused by the repression is at an end. The mind of the patient thus becomes once more a homogeneous unity, and is assisted and encouraged to adapt itself to life or to the realisation of the Real.

During the process, no reference is made to the unpleasant cause of the conflict. The author of the Gita, though he knew the cause of Arjuna's inaction, did not mention it as that would not have helped him to unburden his sub-conscious mind. It would have been simply to ask him to believe, on the authority of another, what he had already refused to realise or even consider, and the mention of it would merely have worried and annoyed him.

Arjuna's original repressed feelings were a constant source of energy and emotion which he could not control, as he did not know their origin. The Lord saw that he must be made actually to liberate that energy, and not merely to argue about it.

Knowing Arjuna's conviction that visible manifestations are real and that nothing existed beyond them, so that if he killed his relations they would be permanently lost to him, Sri Krishna tried to convince him that all that is visible is not real. The belief that the visible is the real was the actual

origin of the train of mental and physical symptoms that he exhibited on the battlefield.

To convince Arjuna that the visible was *not* the real Lord Krishna had to explain to him the theory of cause and effect as laid down by Kapila in his Samkhya philosophy. The matter which becomes manifest to us through our organs of sense, producing sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which appear and disappear, is not real; it has no continuity. The man who is not affected by these manifestations, who is not moved by pleasure or pain, is steadfast and fitted for immortality.

Matter, of whatever kind, is not manifest to us unless we have the sense of awareness. This condition is not inherent in the limbs or in the eyes or the ears or any part of the body. The dead body has no sense of awareness; awareness is the property of that which resides in the living body, the Ego, the soul, or the subjective consciousness.

This Ego is abstract, unknowable, and cannot be perceived by the senses. The material forms in which this eternal, indestructible, immeasurable One exists are finite. Both he who regards this dweller in the body as a slayer, or he who thinks that he is slain are alike ignorant of the true nature of the Real. The Embodied Self is not born, nor does it die. The sub-conscious mind is not born with the body, but presides over it, being itself unborn, perpetual, eternal and ancient; it is therefore not to be slain with the body, it cannot kill nor be killed. When this dweller in the body dissociates itself from its physical form, it enters into another which is new, and carries on its eternal existence. "Weapons cleave

him not, nor fire burneth him, nor wind drieth him up." Knowing it to be such, one should not grieve for the destruction of the outer form. Arjuna was unable to accept this explanation of Sri Krishna, because he had not yet experienced the consciousness of this Embodied Eternal. His mental condition was such that he could not accept anything on the mere statement of his master. Sri Krishna, therefore, tells him that even according to his own way of thinking his attitude is wrong, for "Even if you think of the Eternal as constantly born and constantly dying you should not grieve, for it is in conformity with the universal law that death is certain for the born."

Reasoning thus according to the postulates of the Samkhya philosophy, the Lord tried to stimulate Arjuna's repressed energy of action. He tried to convince him that the members of the parties ready to fight were changeable, visible, perishable forms and not the Real Self which is the same in every form and body; that when one killed or was killed by another, the manifested form went to the elements from which it emanated, while the unmanifested, the subjective consciousness, mingled again with the unmanifested, the Super conscious, of which it was a spark. Therefore he bade Arjuna shake off his lethargy and do his duty as a Kshatriya by fighting his enemies; for there was no need to grieve over killing an opponent in a righteous cause.

Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, are not the properties of the physical body, but are experienced by the embodied consciousness. One should, therefore, in the physical body, be unmindful of these results, and fight. No sin will be

incurred thereby, for the cause is righteous. The Lord adds force to his argument by saying: "Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than to fight in a righteous battle." Arjuna was not inclined to accept this abstract argument; and he had considered Sri Krishna as his equal, and we do not readily accept advice which comes to us from our equals or inferiors, though we often accept it readily enough if it comes from a superior whether in rank or mental capacity. Arjuna was no exception to this rule, and so Sri Krishna told him that he had not been merely uttering his own ideas, but had the authority of the Samkhya philosophy.

This metaphysical method of rebuilding the mind leads it to the deeper sources of thought and action. It prevents bondage to the limitations of forms by awakening consciousness of the Reality which animates forms, and at the same time prevents the creation of imperfect conditions, by the realisation of the sub-conscious.

Sri Krishna, after making Arjuna realise the knowledge of the Self by reasoning about the physical manifestations of the unmanifest, now initiates him into the mysteries of the Self and its working by Yoga, that is by spiritual or psychic methods. When these are known and practised, the individual soul is freed from its bondage by releasing the past impressions on the sub-conscious to the organs of action (Karma-Bandham-Prahasyasi) (see diagram on page 71.)

CHAPTER VI

Educating the mind by psychic knowledge (Buddhi-yoga-marga)

GITA CHAPTER II (*Contd.*)

In this method of gaining knowledge of the Self, no effort is lost, however small, and consequently there is no disappointment. Even a little knowledge of this Self (Dharmasya) protects an individual from great fear. The reasoning or voluntarily controlled mind can only contemplate one thing at a time, that is to say, when the attention is directed, "with will and determination" to one particular thought or idea, no other thought or idea can displace it. This law of the working of the mind is taken advantage of by Sri Krishna, and he advises Arjuna to make a voluntary effort to control his objective or created mind and direct it to the contemplation of a state of perfection. The minds of those who do not make this effort spend themselves in many directions, and are more or less at the mercy of the senses and their manifestations. Such an irresolute mind is not fit for the practice of Yoga.

The Vedas speak of three qualities of the mind —spiritual (Sattvic), material (Rajasic) and vicious or wayward (Tamasic). Arjuna is advised to rise above the effects of these qualities (Nistraigunya), to become indifferent to the pairs of opposites, to become

attached to the divine qualities of the Embodied Self (Nityasatvastha) instead of to worldly objects and to merge himself in the Self (Niryoga-Kshema.) A man who is moved by pleasures and hardships, and who allows his mind to be disturbed by them, has not the strength of will necessary for the practice of Yoga.

The Samkhya philosophy prepares the mind for the practice of Yoga, which is the highest and most powerful of philosophies. It has, however, one disadvantage—it intensifies energy, but does not necessarily direct it to the right point. Consequently, if it is practised by those who are strongly attached to pleasure or power, they may use it only for the attainment of worldly objects. This leads to rebirth as the fruit of action, which is not the right aim of Yoga. This misdirected intensified energy proves decidedly dangerous inasmuch as it has the potentiality both for good and evil acts. Yoga should only be practised for the realisation of divine qualities and for the building of character and never for the objects of desire. The Lord Sri Krishna advises his disciple to direct his objective consciousness towards the sub-conscious, in which the perfect Real, the Super-conscious Self, predominates, and not to seek for results from his actions. When this sense of perfection is awakened in the objective consciousness, he is not to be satisfied with the enjoyment brought by it and give up the practice of Yoga, but is to press on still further, renouncing all desire for and attachment to external things, until he has perfectly harmonised the subjective and the objective conscious-

nesses to work absolutely in unison. This unity of working between the two minds is called Yoga (Samatvam-yoga-oochyate). This complete identification of the objective with the subjective consciousness for the purpose of realising the still higher consciousness is the most difficult, yet the most developed, stage of Yoga (Nirvikalpa-samadhi).

In this Yoga, our physical activity is inhibited, and so the average man cannot practise it while following his ordinary avocations. Sri Krishna, therefore, says that if one cannot follow this Yoga which leads to inaction, one must follow that which leads to action, even though that is somewhat lower. In the Yoga of action, the objective consciousness is guided from within by the subjective consciousness and not from without by the impressions derived from the organs of sense. These impressions from without make the objective consciousness work for results—for the gratification of the senses; but when the objective consciousness works according to the dictates of the sub-conscious, the question of results, whether good or bad, does not arise, for actions are performed by it merely as the agent of the sub-conscious. This is true Yoga, "Skill in action." (Yogah-karmasu Kausalam). The wise, who have so united their two states of consciousness, and care no more for results, are free from the fetters of rebirth, and reach the state which is beyond all evil.

As it is only the man with a stable mind, steadfast in contemplation, who can attain this Yoga, Arjuna now enquires what are the qualities of such a man, how does he talk, work, sit, walk and so on.

This question is probably an unconscious attempt on Arjuna's part to hide the sore spot on his sub-conscious mind, which his conscious self fears to uncover because of the pain it would cause. This shows that his objective consciousness, which has so long been under the dominion of external conditions, is now being drawn inwards and is beginning to think reasonably. In answer to his question Sri Krishna defines the qualities of the stable-minded person. He is one who suppresses all desires and emotions arising in the conscious mind, and directs the energy thus acquired towards the Embodied consciousness so that it may attain the divine qualities. He is one who is free from anxiety amid troubles, indifferent amid pleasures, free from passion, fear and anger, without attachment, without likes and dislikes, and not bound to the objects of sense. The self indulgent dweller in the body is constantly receiving impressions from the objects of sense, but the stable-minded does not relish them, his repressed energy is not let loose for the gratification of desires produced by them. All relish for the objects of sense disappears when the energy derived from repressed desires is directed to the realisation of the Self. Even a wise man, who is making a genuine effort to control his mind, may sometimes be led astray if he is excited by his senses; the objective consciousness for a time gets the upper hand, and may again become attached to the objects of desire. This attachment impels the sub-conscious mind to produce energy to satisfy the demands of the sense impressions. If for some reason or other, within or without the man's physical self, the desire

is not satisfied the energy is driven back to the sub-conscious and translates itself into anger. That, being also repressed, produces loss of memory, and disharmony between the sub-conscious and the conscious, for the conscious mind receiving no force from behind to enable it to gratify its desires, becomes inactive and goes to pieces. A man, whose objective mind has been trained to look up to the sub-conscious, is free from attraction or repulsion, even though he be surrounded by the objects of sense; being guided by the sub-conscious, he is free from all pain and his objective mind remains well-poised and at peace. He whose objective consciousness is not directed towards the sub-conscious cannot keep his consciousness pure, for it is constantly being liberated for the gratification of his senses. When the mind is unsteady, the consciousness is also unsteady, and without fixed determination there is no concentration, and consequently no peace. The objective consciousness which is led away by the roving senses is like a boat tossed about on a rough sea by a gale.

Normally the subjective consciousness is asleep when the objective consciousness is active. During the day the objective consciousness is doing its work while the subjective consciousness is lying dormant. It is only during the night, when all the voluntary functions of the physical body are at a standstill, that the subjective consciousness wakes up and does its work of enforcing upon the objective consciousness the impressions it has received.

He who meditates and concentrates upon an ob-

ject of desire, can, by controlling his mind, wake up the dormant subjective consciousness in him at any moment so as to give a creative impulse to the sub-conscious mind and so gain that object of desire. If the object be worldly, the creative impulse is transferred to the objective mind for the production of the necessary physical activity to gain it, but if the object be final emancipation, the creative force generated in the sub-conscious is directed towards the knowledge of the Super-conscious.

He alone obtains that peace, whose objective consciousness remains unmoved, and not he whose consciousness is ever ready to satisfy desires. Sri Krishna, therefore, advises Arjuna to strive to reach that state of Super-consciousness (Brahmi-sthiti) by forsaking desires, egoism, and becoming selfless. Once that stage is reached, no more bewilderment is felt. He who enters this Stage of Super-consciousness, even on his deathbed, attains final beatitude (Brahma-Nirvana).

CHAPTER VII

Path of emancipation by action (Karma-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER III

The sub-conscious mind, which comes with all its past impressions into the body at birth, forces man to action according to the predominant quality by which it is marked. The man who controls the activity of the body while allowing his sub-conscious mind to be impressed by desires, is a hypocrite. These impressions influence the sub-conscious mind of such a man, and are temporarily repressed, so that his objective consciousness, which is concerned with physical manifestations for the gratification of desire. remains for a time inactive. The energy confined by this repression will be liberated some time or other to gain the objects of desire under favourable conditions. A man whose mind is really and properly controlled, does not allow the sub-conscious to be impressed and no new Karma is generated (Kriyamana-Karma).

A man who uses the energy produced by repressing the activity of the organs of sense to gain the knowledge of the subjective consciousness, continues to perform mental actions, and the physical actions done in accordance with the knowledge so gained are inevitable actions (Niyata Karma). They are predes-

tined actions. They must be discharged if embodied soul is to be liberated from bondage. Sri Krishna, therefore, advises Arjuna to do inevitable actions without an eye for the result.

If an inevitable action is not performed according to the dictates of the sub-conscious mind, certain vital activities of the body, which are controlled by the sub-conscious, will go wrong also, with the result that the normal functioning of the body would be difficult as he was experiencing at that very moment. Inevitable action therefore is better than inaction. It is indirect hint to Arjuna to fight.

This statement of Sri Krishna about action seemed paradoxical to Arjuna. It seemed to him that Sri Krishna had been advising him to learn how to merge the objective consciousness into the subjective according to the Samkhya philosophy, a process which leads a man ultimately to inaction, and now was advising him to act in order that he might attain final emancipation. Arjuna's misunderstanding is due to the fact that he understands action to mean the direction of the objective consciousness towards gaining the objects of desire or the gratification of the senses. He, therefore, quite naturally asks his Master why, if the gaining of metaphysical knowledge is superior to action, he should be forced into this fearful action of engaging in battle.

Sri Krishna is trying to bring to the consciousness of Arjuna the sore spot on his sub-conscious, and Arjuna's constant interruptions in the course of the teaching, show his sensitiveness as the sore spot is touched. The Master, seeing that Arjuna is now

taking an intelligent interest in his teachings, tries to remove the misunderstanding of the word 'action' from his pupil's mind.

He says: There are two ways in which the objective consciousness may be merged into the subjective. One is by virtue of a knowledge of the doctrines of the Samkhya, that is by perception, inference and revelation. This is a process of involution, by which the organs of senses are subdued, so that they may not convey their impressions to the sub-conscious mind. It works inwards from without, and thus controls the mind.

The second is the psychic method which the Yogi follows. This is a process of evolution, and works outwards from within. By this process the mind is controlled at its very source, and thought, its creative energy, is directed to take its inspiration from the sub-conscious, so that it may work through the conscious mind without restriction or interference

By controlling physical activity a man does not obtain freedom from action, nor does he obtain final emancipation. Indeed, it is not possible for him to abstain entirely from action, for he is driven to it unavoidably by the quality of the impressions made on his sub-conscious in past lives.

In support of his statement, the author of the Gita explains the whole machinery of action as described in the Scriptures (see also the Prasnopanishad). The Lord of Beings (Prajapati), having created mankind and at the same time having sacrificed himself

(Saha-yajnah)* to become in them the sub-conscious, said: "Let this be to you the source and giver of the object of desire (Kama-dhuk)." The impressions of the material objects, when accompanied by an intensity of desire to possess them, are recorded on the sub-conscious and are liberated to achieve their ends in this or the future life. Thus, the sub-conscious in this life generates desires that were impressed upon it by the organs of sense in past lives. These desires are liberated through the agency of the conscious-self. The controlled conscious-self, unmindful of the impressions of the organs of sense, is attached to the sub-conscious to absorb its divine qualities; in return for which the conscious-self allows the sub-conscious to establish direct connection with the organs of action (Devah) for liberation of desires (Karma). The teachings of the Gita do not advise annihilation of the conscious-self but the use of it to gain the final emancipation. This dual action enables an individual to attain the highest good by helping the sub-conscious to free itself from all past impressions, be they good or bad, moral or immoral. According to this teaching of the Gita, the sinful impressions of past lives must be liberated to free the entangled embodied soul from the web of Karma. Those who have not controlled their conscious-minds liberate them to suffer a cycle of re-births. The unrighteous, who practise hypocrisy by controlling their organs of action, do not liberate their sinful Karma but mentally they cherish desire for it. It acts as a food for the organs of action. They commit sin by not discharg-

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* यज्ञेन विष्णुना अर्थात् आत्मना सह वर्तमाना: प्रजा: सृष्ट्वा

ing the energy of impressions for their gratification. They are like thieves. But the righteous, who have controlled their conscious-self are momentarily dragged down by their organs of sense to fulfil their sinful acts of past lives; but their conscious-self having absorbed the divine qualities of the sub-conscious refrain from doing this. Here, the Karma is discharged, and its bad effects averted to save the pious individual from the ignominy of it.

Food, in the form of vital energy (Prana), supports all life. The cosmic impulse that throbs all round us enters the body as the chief Prana at birth and gives life to it. It differentiates itself into five varieties (Pancha-prana), to take charge of the different functions of the body. The organs of action and of knowledge are alike dependent for their activity upon these vital energies, without which they would be starved into inactivity, and become useless, for these organs lose their functions and become atrophied if they are not used. The stimulation of these organs by the vital activities acts as food to them and keeps them in working order; just as rain stimulates corn to growth, so do desires stimulate these human energies to action. The liberation of impressions (Yajnyat) made on the sub-conscious mind causes desires. These impressions are themselves the result of past actions, and these past actions had their source in the sub-conscious (Brahma). The sub-conscious is the embodied spark of the Super conscious, the Imperishable (Akshara). The sub-conscious, therefore, is the all-permeating (Sarva-gata) source of action and is constantly forcing men into activity. He

who does not obey this wheel of action, which is set revolving by his own impressions on the sub-conscious material, indulges his senses and leads a sinful life. He is not living to liberate his sub-conscious spirit, the spark of the Super-conscious, and, therefore, he lives in vain. So Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to perform action constantly, as a duty, without attachment to results, in order that he may reach the Supreme. To illustrate his meaning he mentions the sage-king Janaka and others who attained perfection by doing action as duty.

He tells Arjuna also that it is not only for his own sake that he should be active, but for the sake of showing others the right path, for men usually follow the example of the great. He shows how he himself does this:—"As a divine being I have nothing that it is my duty to do, nor in all the three worlds is there anything for me to gain, yet I mingle in action so that people may follow my example. If I did not do so, I should be a cause of confusion and chaos."

A wise man should not interfere with the actions of those who still act with attachment to the objects of sense, but he should set them an example by acting according to the qualities of the sub-conscious, without any attachment. All actions really originate in the sub-conscious and are in accordance with the qualities that have become attached to it, but the objective consciousness, which grows with the body and which is ignorant of the source of its inspiration, thinks of itself as the doer. He who knows the qualities and their functions, knows that the subjective consciousness which is embodied in us attracts

towards itself those qualities in nature which are akin to those which it possesses, for like attracts like, and so it impels the objective consciousness to carry out its injunctions in conformity with those qualities and not by forming attachments with the external objects of sense. Here the action starts outwards from within. In the case of those who do not know this, the external objects of sense impress the sub-conscious inwards from without and the objective consciousness acts in accordance with those impressions, that is, the actions they do are done from attachment to the objects of sense. A wise man who understands both these ways of working should not interfere with the actions of those whose knowledge is imperfect, because such interference is useless so long as they continue to act according to the impressions made on the sub-conscious from without. When we know that the sub-conscious, the Embodied Self, is part of the Super-conscious, the Supreme Self, we ascribe all action to it. Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to bring this fact to his consciousness (Chetas) and to engage in battle without desire, without egoism, and without any mental anxiety to hinder him.

Every man who follows these teachings of the divine Author of the Gita with faith (Shraddha) and without carping or cavilling, and who acts according to the dictates of the subjective consciousness, is engaged in liberating the sub-conscious self from past attachments, and, as no new impressions are being formed on the sub-conscious, owing to the control of the mind, there is nothing to bring the sub-conscious into the forefront of the conscious, and he is released

from future action. Even those who have this knowledge of the working of the two aspects of the mind must act in conformity with the attached qualities of the sub-conscious, until these are restored to that perfect balance which belongs to the Super-conscious. It is the law that all beings must follow nature; therefore, to restrict actions from without, while there is still the embodied activity within, will be useless.

All affections and aversions have their source in the organs and the objects of sense. These obstruct the doing of right actions, and no one should allow himself to be controlled by them. It is better to act, however meanly and insignificantly, according to the dictates of one's own conscience than to do the bidding of another. The Author of the Gita even goes so far as to say that it is better to die as the result of following one's own conscience than to save one's life by following the advice of some one else. He wishes to impress upon his disciples that they should not be guided by the sub-conscious minds of others in the performance of their own duty, because, if they do, they may become the tools of those who guide them. Action done according to the dictates of another is full of danger (Paradharmo-bhayavahah).

These teachings of Sri Krishna about the workings of the mind cleared away many of Arjuna's doubts, yet there still remained another question—why is a man compelled to do a bad action against his will? The answer given to him is that the cause of this compulsion is to be found in desire and in anger, which are born from the Rajasic quality of nature.

The sub-conscious had this quality attached to it when it was embodied. Desires have their abode in the organs of sense, in the mind and in the objective consciousness, and by these the purity of the sub-conscious is enveloped and deluded. By mastering the senses one can do away with these desires which delude the sub-conscious.

The senses are a great source of energy. Greater than the senses is the mind, greater than the mind is the objective consciousness, but the greatest of all is the embodied sub-conscious. Therefore, knowing that the sub-conscious is the greatest source of energy, one should try to control the physical activity of the body—that is, the very physical self—through the agency of the sub-conscious, and thus destroy the desires that surround it.

The Lord Sri Krishna, in this explanation of right action, indirectly appeals to Arjuna to kill his enemies who have been the cause of desire and anger, thus controlling the physical self which has given way to outside impressions due to physical energy.

CHAPTER VIII

Action, inaction and perverted action
(Karma-jnyana-vibhaga-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER IV

Sri Krishna tried, further, to impress upon Arjuna's mind the importance of merging the objective consciousness into the imperishable subjective consciousness by telling him of the antiquity of this knowledge. It was first preached by him to Vivasvata, Vivasvata handed down the knowledge to Manu, and Manu imparted it to the royal sages, Iksvaku and others. After this, there being no proper person worthy to receive this knowledge, it was lost sight of, and now this profound secret of the ancient knowledge is retold to Arjuna, his devotee and friend.

Arjuna could not understand how his Master could have imparted knowledge to those who lived so long before him, so Sri Krishna explained that both he and Arjuna had had many previous births, which facts Arjuna had forgotten, while he himself remembered them all.

The sub-conscious mind of the materialist, like that of Arjuna, is so engrossed in generating energy by means of external impressions, that it has no opportunity of exhibiting its inherent qualities or manifesting its pure existence to the fullest extent. It is guided to action almost entirely by the objects of

sense. Whenever this sub-conscious mind, which comes to everyone as a part of Prakriti, is overpowered by the objective consciousness, its divine attributes are denied by unrighteous actions. The subjective mind, having thus no outlet for its own energy, broods over its own divine attributes, and though in reality unborn and imperishable, appears in human form again and again, bringing with it those attributes in order to preserve whatever is good in man and to destroy what is bad.

This explanation of the re-birth of the subjective consciousness explains to us the continuity of the sub-conscious in men in their successive births. When the suppressed energy of the divine qualities is fully discharged, the sub-conscious is no longer impressionable from within or from without. It then, being fully evolved in action, dissociates itself from the body, never to be born again, and blends with that Super-consciousness from which it emanated. Those who have conquered anger and fear, who are free from attachment to worldly objects, who act in accordance with the prompting of the sub-conscious and know its divine qualities, are liberated from the cycle of re-birth.

Men have many different motives for impressing the sub-conscious, but, whatever their motive may be, if the impression is made with sufficiently strong feeling, their desires are fulfilled. In this worldly life, most men try to impress their minds with the glittering objects of desire, and these are much more easily obtainable than the desire for the knowledge of the sub-conscious self.

When the sub-conscious self, after leaving the physical body, once more joins Prakriti in preparation for a new birth, it attaches to itself that quality of matter from which it received most impressions when it was last embodied. The resulting combinations are classified into four groups according to the nature of those impressions. The highest is that form of Spirit-matter (Purusha-Prakriti) which is suitable to Yogis who desire to merge their objective consciousness in the subjective. The next is that group of saintly characters who desire to use their objective consciousness for the realisation of the divine qualities of the sub-conscious. The third is suitable for materialists, who impress the sub-conscious with the external objects of sense, but in a discriminating manner, while the fourth goes to those vicious persons whose sole object is the gratification of their desires by means of the organs of sense, and who thus allow the objective consciousness to gain supremacy over the subjective.

Though all actions arise from impressions made on the sub-conscious, yet the sub-conscious is not the real doer, as it is the non-acting part of the body. As the sub-conscious self does not take part in the physical activity of the body, it cannot have any longing for the results of action. It is the physical body alone that bears the pangs and pleasures arising from the objects of sense. Knowing this, all the ancient seekers after freedom performed their worldly duties. Sri Krishna, therefore, advises Arjuna to follow their example, and, by doing the actions that are his duty, to carry on the war to an end.

So far it has been explained that the sub-conscious is the real originator, though not the real doer, of actions. The next step is to explain the difference between action and inaction, which has bewildered even the sages, but which it is essential to understand if freedom from evil is to be obtained.

There are three kinds of action spoken of—action (Karma), inaction (A-karma), and perverted action (Vi-karma). It is very difficult to understand the difference between them. The Author of the Gita enigmatically says that he who sees action in inaction and inaction in action is a Yogi among the doers of action who are endowed with the knowledge of the sub-conscious (Buddhimana.)

We are apt to think that physical activity is the only action, because it is visible, and we do not realise that in creating thought we are doing invisible action with our minds. Thought is manifested in physical activity when it is directed towards the exciting of the objective consciousness, but it results in the suppression of physical activity when it is directed to the realisation of the subjective consciousness. This happens because the mind of man can only hold one thought or one idea at a time. So when there is mental activity there is physical inactivity. The reverse is also true, for physical activity, directed to the gratification of desires. puts a stop to all thought of the understanding of the divine qualities, and mental activity becomes impossible.

Inaction in the mental state, when visible action is at a standstill, is possible only to those who have merged their objective consciousness in the subjective,

that is, by those Yogis, who have reached the Nirvikalpa form of Samadhi, where all desires are burnt away.

Arjuna had not yet reached the stage of complete inaction, nor was it possible for him to do so in the position in life in which he then was. The Great Master wished him to do action, right action which would help him to gain his object and at the same time lead him to final emancipation. The essential condition for proper visible action is control of the mind. This control does not allow impressions from without to reach the sub-conscious; and so no new Karma is created by the mind to be liberated in future births by the gratification of desires; but the energy of the impressions of past lives, which the embodied sub-conscious has brought over into this life, must be liberated, so that the sub-conscious may be freed from the shackles of attachment. In this liberation of energy the present life, if the mind is controlled, has no concern. The physical body, and not the objective consciousness, acts as the agent of the sub-conscious, whereby it unloads the burden of past unfulfilled actions.

The objective consciousness acts as the agent of the sub-conscious for the present incarnation only, but the physical body acts as its agent for the past and future ones as well. When ultimately the sub-conscious is freed from the burden of past impressions by doing visible actions, its vehicle—the body—is finally liberated to gain its emancipation after many incarnations.

When the creative energy of the mind—thought

—has its source in the objects of sense, it excites the objective consciousness to do physical actions to satisfy the cravings of the organs of sense. Here there is absolute lack of self-control, and all action done without self-control is perverted action.

If, bearing in mind this distinction between action and perverted action, all actions are done without affection or aversion, without envy or greed, without caring for success or failure, the individual is not bound to re-birth, because all such actions are done as a sacrifice to free the sub-conscious self, the embodied soul, from bondage.

This performance of action with knowledge of the working of the mental field is summed up by Sri Krishna in the following verse:—"Brahman is the oblation, with Brahman it is offered up in the fire of Brahman, where, by Brahman it is thrown. Brahman is the goal to which he proceeds who meditates upon Brahman in action." There is a play on the word Brahman in this verse. If we consider the different meanings which are assigned to the word, the meaning of the verse becomes clear, and shows us the way in which the Super-conscious is reached. In the fire of subjective consciousness (Brahmagnau) the oblation of the intellect, the objective consciousness (Brahmahavis), is offered to the Super-consciousness (Brahmarpanam) by one versed in this sacred knowledge (Brahmanah), and by virtue of meditating on the action of the sub-conscious (Brahma-karma-samadhina) only such a one reaches the state of Super-conscious (Brahmaiva).

There are different methods used, according to

the different grades of evolution, to reach the super-conscious (Brahma). Spiritually-minded people (Sattvic) control the activity of the mental field, wholly or partially, in order to reach this stage. A materialist (Rajasic) prepares himself to reach it by restraining the activity of his physical field by renouncing worldly pleasures, by practising austerity, by following the rules of Yoga (as given by Patanjali), by reciting incantations and by vows; while a vicious man (Tamasic) prepares himself to reach the same stage by subjecting his body to various physical practices, by which he controls his afferent (Prana) and efferent (Apana) impulses. and by practising the process of Pranayama. Those not included in any of these classes make themselves physically unfit, by regulating their food, to receive any afferent impulses from outside which might impress the sub conscious, and send all efferent impulses from within to unburden the sub-conscious and thus try to liberate themselves.

All these people are doing actions, either physically or mentally, in order to reach the divine nature of the sub-conscious, and having reached it, they pass to the Eternal Super-conscious State (Sanatana-Brahma). He who does not strive in some way to reach the Eternal Brahma is not fit for this world, much less for any other.

There are many other ways of reaching the Eternal mentioned in the Srutis. These ways are the result of impressions imprinted on the sub-conscious in past lives. The Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to

act after learning the knowledge of action, so that he may, be released from re-birth.

He then tries to explain what kinds of actions done for the purpose of reaching the Eternal are superior to the others; those arising from the mental field or those from the physical. He says that the actions arising from the control of the mind are superior to those which result from the control of the senses, but that all actions, whatever be their origin, will ultimately attain their consummation in knowledge of the Divine. He advises his hearers to obtain their knowledge from expert teachers, by discipleship, by investigation and by service. When the Eternal is cognized, there is no more delusion, and the Eternal is seen in all things. The sub-conscious minds of all men are identical, because they come from the Supreme. Just as a blazing fire reduces wood to ashes, so the fire of this spark of the Eternal reduces all actions to ashes. There is no greater purifier in the world than knowledge of the Eternal Self. In due time after many incarnations, having gained perfection in the performance of action (Karma-Yoga), one gains knowledge of the Eternal in one's own self. It is obtainable by those who have faith in action as a means of gaining knowledge and who have mastered their senses. Having thus gained knowledge of the Self, one passes quickly to the Supreme Peace (Para-Santi).

The ignorant and the faithless, who doubt the existence of the Self, go to destruction; there is no happiness for them in this world or in any other. He who has renounced all physical actions by sub-

merging the objective consciousness in the subjective, he whose ideas about the nature and potency of action have become clarified by knowledge of the Eternal, and he who is guided to action by his own embodied consciousness—these are not bound by their actions. Arjuna, therefore, should give up his dejection, and, removing all doubts from his mind by the knowledge of this wisdom, should act.

CHAPTER IX

Identity of renunciation of action with performance of action (*Sannyasa-yoga*)

GITA CHAPTER V

Sri Krishna, in the opening verses of the fourth chapter of the Gita, preached renunciation of all action to Arjuna and yet in the last three verses of the same chapter, he urges him to action. Arjuna is naturally puzzled by this seeming contradiction and asks him which is the better of the two. The Lord's answer is that performance of action (Karma-Yoga) is superior to renunciation of action (Karma-Sannyasa), though both ultimately lead to freedom.

Arjuna understood the contradiction about Karma in his mind as the result of physical actions in this life. Sri Krishna referred to the actions arising from the mental field as the impressions of previous births coming to fruition in this life (Prarabdha-Karma). Praiabdha-Karma is an action prescribed by destiny (Niyat-Karma). It must be liberated without an eye for the result; when this is done the action becomes beyond attributes (II, 45; XIV, 25) and leads to the freedom of the embodied soul from the bondage. Two ways previously mentioned by Sri Krishna for liberating Prarabdha-Karma to the organs of action (II, 39; III, 3). (1) Educating the mind

by metaphysical knowledge (Samkhya-Marga) in which renunciation occurs by handing over Karma to the organs of action (Karma-Sannyasa) and (2) Educating the mind by psychic knowledge (Yogic-Marga) in which renunciation occurs by raising the qualities of the objective mind (Buddhi) to the level of the divine qualities of the sub-conscious (Buddhi Yoga). This being done, Buddhi gets itself attached to Karma (Karma-Yoga) and it hands over Karma to the organs of action to discharge it. (See diagram on page 71.)

To a householder the Yogic Marga is the better of the two, because it takes into account the conscious phase of mind (Buddhi). It is this that is created (Kshara) and it perishes with the body. Samkhya-Marga is for highly evolved persons.

Renunciation of action is of two kinds, one which is done with full knowledge of the working of the mental field and its attributes, and the other which is done without that knowledge. Ignorant people renounce all visible action of the physical body and pose as Sannyasins though all the time their sub-conscious mind is receiving impressions from the objects of sense. They only suppress the energy of their impressions for a time, and when it is ultimately liberated they will be completely swayed by the objects of sense. Though their physical activity is stopped, the generation of Karma is not. This kind of renunciation is only practised by hypocrites, as mentioned in the third chapter.

The true renunciation of action is practised by a Jnyani versed in the metaphysical philosophy of

the Samkhya. He suppresses mental activity by turning the organs of sense inwards towards the sub-conscious (Jnyana-Yoga) so as to prevent generation of new Karma (Kriyamana) and to destroy that which is fully ripe (Prarabdha) by liberating it to the organs of action (Karma-Sannyasa). By such a process of prevention and liberation of Karma, Jnyana-Yoga and Karma-Sannyasa work hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other. They are synonymous terms. The renunciation of action is only possible to those who have no attachment to the things of the world, and who are emancipated whilst in the body (Jeevan-Mukta). This certainly is not the renunciation advised by Sri Krishna because, Arjuna had not reached this state. The author of the Gita simply points out to the reader Karma-Sannyasa and Karma-Yoga as being identical in action. (Chap. V, 5). But the processes of arriving at that action are different.

If we apply the words Sannyasa and Yoga to the physical body, they mean respectively renunciation of and the performance of physical action, and their results are different; but if the words be applied to the sub-conscious, which with its past impressions (Karma) is embodied in us, the results of the working of Sannyasa and Yoga become identical.

In Karma-Sannyasa the renunciation of past impressions by the sub-conscious, in order to liberate itself, results in action. It discharges its impressions to the physical body, which are manifested in action. It is the process of action outwards from within. In Karma-Yoga, the objective phase of the mind is joined to the subjective to produce an identical result. The

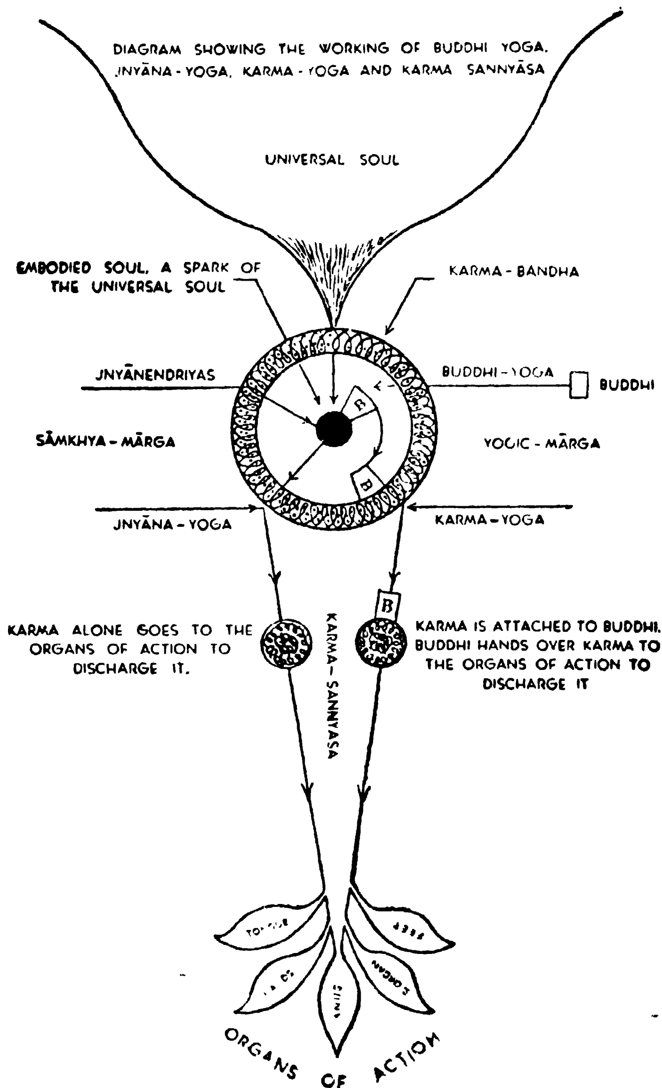


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE WORKING OF BUDDHI YOGA.
JNYĀNA - YOGA, KARMA - YOGA AND KARMA SANNYĀSA
UNIVERSAL SOUL
EMBODIED SOUL, A SPARK OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL
KARMA - BANDHA
JNYĀNENDRIYAS
BUDDHI - YOGA
BUDDHI
SĀMKHYA - MĀRGA
YOGIC - MĀRGA
B
B
JNYĀNA - YOGA
KARMA - YOGA
B
KARMA ALONE GOES TO THE ORGANS OF ACTION TO DISCHARGE IT.
KARMA - SANNYĀSA
KARMA IS ATTACHED TO BUDDHI. BUDDHI HANDS OVER KARMA TO THE ORGANS OF ACTION TO DISCHARGE IT
ORGANS OF ACTION

qualities of the objective mind (Buddhi) being raised to the level of those of the sub-conscious the obstructive tendency of the reasoning mind is done away with, and then the sub-conscious rules supreme in the nine-gated city, *i.e.*, the body with its nine openings. The web of impressions surrounding the sub-conscious self is handed over to the objective mind for fulfilment in action by means of the physical body. Here the objective mind acts as the agent of the sub-conscious, not the physical body as in Karma-Sannyasa. The subjective consciousness must be awakened if it is to discharge its impressions on its own initiative. This awakening is very difficult for men living in the material world, even when they know how the mental states work, and hence Karma-Sannyasa is almost impossible of achievement by men of the world; but the subjective consciousness can be awakened by psychic methods (Yoga) by controlling the activities of the body, mind, and objective consciousness, and directing the energy gained by such control towards the sub-conscious by meditation and devotion. Action, performed in this way, awakens the subjective mind and causes it to liberate its impressions by manifestation through the action of the physical body, is called Karma-Yoga.

When one knows that the source of action is the Embodied Self with its impressions, one is able to perform action without attachment and is as unaffected by sin as a lotus leaf is unaffected by the water that falls upon it. Karmayogis, having abandoned attachment and the desire for the fruits of action, perform actions, not for the satisfaction of their

desires, but for the purification of the Embodied Self, and, when that is completed, they attain Eternal Peace. Though the sub-conscious self is said to be the source of all action, that does not mean that it is the agent or doer of the action, nor does it imply any connection with or desire for the fruit of action. The real agent or doer is the sum of the impressions (Swabhava) received by it in past lives, and therefore the results of the actions do not concern the Embodied Self. When the envelope of impressions around the sub-conscious is destroyed by manifestation in actions, the Embodied Self shines out in all the glory of its divine nature and reaches out towards the Eternal.

In Karma-Yoga, the actions of meditation on or devotion to the sub conscious are done to help nature to do its work of liberating the sub-conscious from bondage. When the objective consciousness is directed towards 'that' (the sub-conscious) and merged into it and made steadfast there by devotion, then men reach THAT (the Super-conscious), then, sins being dispelled by wisdom, they do not return again to their physical bodies to enjoy worldly pleasures.

Sages, when they reach this state, look upon all things—men and animals, rich and poor, high-born or low-born—as equals, because they know that the Eternal Embodied Self, incorruptible and balanced, is the same in themselves and in all others. Those who see this Oneness of the Self in all things, control the agitations produced by desire and passion and even in this world are happy and harmonious.

Rishis, men of right vision and renunciation, having done away with the dual aspect of the mind

by controlling their objective consciousness and directing it to the sub-conscious in order to absorb its divine qualities, obtain the Peace of the Eternal (Brahma-Nirvana). This Peace is also obtained by those who have dissociated themselves from desires and passions, who are guided to action by the impressions on the Embodied Self, who have removed their minds from external contacts by controlling the af ferent and efferent (Prana-Apana) impulses of the body and by directing their gaze to the root of the nose. Here the Author of the Gita refers to the Pranayamic method of controlling thought.

A Yogi, desirous of merging this objective mind in the subjective, knowing that these processes of austerity and sacrifice are for the awakening in the subjective mind of the consciousness of the Lord and Lover of men, gains the peace he desires.

He who performs these actions as the duty which comes to him from his past impressions, without caring for the fruits of action, gets rid of the impressions just as effectually as a (Karma) Yogi who translates these liberated impressions into actions.

One cannot be a Sannyasin as well as a Yogi unless the subjective consciousness is awakened by bringing the fire—Kundalini—under conscious control by the practices mentioned above.*

Sri Krishna, after this explanation of renunciation and action, says, "That which is called Sannyasa is known to be Yoga," but to be a Yogi one must have determination (Sankalpa).

* See "The Mysterious Kundalini by the Author.

CHAPTER X

The training of the objective consciousness (Abhyasa-dhyana-yoga).

GITA CHAPTER VI

In the first five chapters we have been told the theory of the working of the two aspects of the mind in order to realise the eternal Peace. In the succeeding chapters we shall learn how this theory is to be put into practice. The first step essential for this practice is the control of the mind, or rather the creative activity of the mind, which manifests itself in the objective consciousness as thought. Only those who have tried to do this can understand what a difficult task it is.

The uncontrolled mind is excited by every object of sense, it passes quickly from one object to another, it is ever-changing, restless, impetuous, and hard to restrain. This fickleness is its inherent quality, and this causes its creative quality to be fickle and restless too. It is the objective consciousness which elevates or degrades us; if we direct it to the objects of sense, it keeps us bound to the wheel of births and deaths, but if we direct it to the realisation of the divine nature of the Embodied Self, it helps us to obtain freedom from that wheel.

Arjuna, knowing how fickle that mind is, says that if Yoga is the directing of the unsteady objective consciousness towards the realisation of the divine

nature of the sub-conscious in order to unify the working of the two aspects it is very difficult to attain, because the mind in its very nature is changeable, restless and as hard to restrain as the wind.

Sri Krishna agrees that this is so, but assures him that it can be controlled by practice and patience, and that Yoga can be achieved by controlling our physical and mental activities and directing the resultant energy into proper channels. The objective consciousness is not easily controlled in a place where the objects of sense are ever ready to disturb, but it can be done in a suitable secluded place, where there are few chances of its being so disturbed. When the objective consciousness is made steady, its energy is concentrated on the eternal sub-conscious by sitting in the position of composure (Padmasana) with body, head and neck erect and still, and looking fixedly and steadily at the point of the nose. This posture is necessary to keep the body motionless, otherwise its unchecked restlessness would disturb the mind and dissipate the energy upon surrounding objects. At first, it is difficult to fix the energy obtained by suppression of physical activity on any one point, it has a tendency to ramble among the objects of sense, but repeated efforts must be made to bring it back and fix it on one object, the Embodied Self. In this way the objective consciousness is made to prevent the manifestation of desires by restraining the organs of sense; then being made impervious to all outside influence, it is directed to constant meditation on the sub-conscious self and its attributes till it assumes

the divine nature of the sub-conscious and becomes one with it.

Sages who are engaged in this unification of the two aspects of the mind, use Karma (the energy of past impressions) as the means of achieving it, and when the union is complete (Yogarudha) a state of tranquillity is reached which makes final emancipation possible.

A man should therefore elevate his self (the objective consciousness) by his self (the subjective); he should not annihilate the objective self, but keep it under control. The controlled self is the man's best friend, but the uncontrolled or annihilated self is his worst enemy, for the uncontrolled self becomes attached to the objects of sense and their gratification, and so keeps a man in bondage, while the annihilated self does not allow the sub-conscious to free itself by exhausting its impressions in action.

A Yogi, whose self is content with the knowledge and wisdom of the sub-conscious, who is unmoved by the vexations of the world, who has restrained his senses, to whom lumps of earth, stone or gold are equally negligible, is said to have completely merged his objective consciousness with the sub-conscious. He who looks with equal regard upon friends, foes, neutrals, foreigners, relatives, righteous and unrighteous, is even better than the former. The distinction made between these two kinds of Yogis is significant. The first is a Yogi of a lower grade who controls his senses and objective consciousness from without, by renunciation of the impressions from the objects of sense, but the second is a Yogi of a higher grade,

who not only controls the impressions of the objects of sense, but also his emotions and repulsions which arise from within.

When the objective is merged in the subjective a Yogi enjoys that supreme happiness which is derived from contact with the Eternal. He sees his own Self, the sub-conscious Self, in others, and others' sub-conscious selves in himself. He sees unity in diversity, and when this unity is reached, he never loses his hold on the Eternal nor does the Eternal lose its hold on him. He is solely devoted to the sub-conscious and this devotion attracts the objective consciousness and holds it in whatever condition the Yogi may be.

The qualities of the perfect Yogi are summed up by saying: "He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere by the same standard which he applies to himself is regarded as the highest Yogi."

Arjuna, having satisfied himself about the controlling of the mind and its creative energy by practice, is now desirous of knowing the condition of a man who is not successful in controlling his mind either by the way of knowledge or the way of action, though he makes genuine and faithful efforts to do so. Sri Krishna tells him that no efforts to reach the Eternal are lost. An impression is made by these efforts on the sub-conscious, which, though it cannot be carried into action or fulfilled in this life, will bring about the re-birth of the Embodied in a pure and blessed house, where it can carry on its efforts and reach perfection. Then, when after many births perfection is attained, he reaches the supreme goal.

A Yogi who has unified the two aspects of his

mind is greater than an ascetic, that is one who is performing actions in order to become a Yogi. He is also greater than one who has a knowledge of the working of the mental field (Jnyani) but does not put that knowledge into practice. He is even superior to those Karmá-Yogis who do action to liberate the sub-conscious from its web of impressions.

Arjuna is therefore advised to become a Yogi, and is told that the best of all the Yogis is he who, with living faith (Shraddha) and full desire, merges his unified consciousness into the Supreme.

CHAPTER XI

Knowledge by realisation of the sub-conscious (Jnyana-vijnyana-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER VII

When the conscious mind has been trained to act perfectly upon the sub-conscious, one realises not only the divine nature of the latter, but also its infinite greatness, strength, power, grace and other attributes. The Author of the Gita now describes the knowledge which comes from realisation (Savidnyana) of the sub-conscious and says there is nothing greater than this that can be known.

Thousands of people practise Yoga, but rarely does one attain perfection, rarely is one able to reach the stage of the Super-conscious. There are many reasons for this failure to attain but Sri Krishna does not mention them. He passes on to certain facts that will help towards attainment.

Matter (Prakriti) is differentiated into many elements, some gross, some subtle. The gross or lower elements (Apara-Prakriti) are earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and the objective material (Buddhi) and egoism that is awareness. These go to form the physical body. The higher subtle element (Para-Prakriti) is the sub-conscious, which animates and sustains the whole universe. The lower and higher

forms of Prakriti, which are derived from universal matter (Mula Prakriti), are manifested in the human body and are the originators and liberators of all beings.

The inherent qualities of things,--the sapidity of water, the radiance of the sun and moon, *om* in the Vedas, sound in Akasha, virility in men. the pure fragrance of the earth, austerity in ascetics, life in beings, intellect in the intelligent. strength devoid of passion in the strong, and all desires not contrary to duty—all these are manifestations of the Universal. In fact, everything abstract which is an inherent property of anything gross is a manifestation of the sub-conscious, and through it of the Super-conscious of which it is a spark. So also are the three qualities. Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, with which the embodied sub-conscious is endowed. The existence of these is manifested only when the Ego comes in connection with the sub-conscious, that is when the sub-conscious is roused in an individual, but the Ego takes no part in their activities. When an individual is swayed by these qualities, which are embodied in a modified form in the sub-conscious, he loses sight of the real Eternal Originator of them. This illusive envelope (Maya) of the sub-conscious self is hard to pierce. Only those who are anxious to reach the Eternal and obtain emancipation are able to break through the web of illusion.

There are four classes of righteous people who try to reach the Eternal by impressing that desire upon the sub-conscious. The first class consists of the distressed (Artah), those who are tired of this

world with its vicissitudes, and who constantly pray, with intensity of feeling, that God will deliver them from this weary existence; they are Mantra Yogis. The second class consists of those seekers for the knowledge (Jidnyasu) of the embodied sub-consciousness who are engaged in trying to practice the divine qualities which will help them to a knowledge of the sub-conscious; they are Laya Yogis. The third class are those who impress the sub-conscious with worldly objects of desire (Artharthi), and who do the impressing with a certain faith in the power of the sub-conscious to enable them to achieve those desires; they are the Hatha Yogis. The fourth class are those Jnyanis, who have already merged the objective consciousness in the sub-conscious that they may reach the Imperishable Brahma; they are the Raja Yogis. All these four classes are devotees of the embodied sub-conscious according to the grade of impressions received in their past lives. They are all conscientiously striving to reach the object of their desire. But of these four classes the Jnyanis, who have unified the two aspects of the mind in order to reach the Absolute, are the most advanced; they have reached this realisation after many births. This awakening of the Super-conscious makes them realise that every visible and invisible thing in Nature is the product of this energy (Vasudev), which is their own innermost self.

Others again, whose consciousness is rent away from the embodied Super-conscious material, become attached to other external objects of worship (Devata) according to their qualities. The creative energy of

the impressions guides their actions to the achievement of the object of their worship. The intense longing necessary for the attainment of the object is created in the individual by impressing that form or object on the sub-conscious, with strength of feeling (Shraddha). When an object is worshipped with such faith the desires of that man are fulfilled.

When the sub-conscious is impressed by external objects, the impressions will be like those objects, and as like produces like, the objects produced in the sub-conscious will be exactly like the external objects from which the impressions proceed. The essential factor is depth of feeling, no idea or desire can enter the sub-conscious unless it is deeply felt. Every idea or desire that *is* deeply felt will enter the sub-conscious whether we desire it to do so or not. These impressions produce strong desires which in their turn excite conscious interest and a living faith in the object. When these are harmoniously blended together, the objective consciousness guides all the actions of the physical body to the achievement of that object.

The objects we gain by these external impressions are finite and perishable. They are obtained during a single life and then the original impressions are wiped out. Only men of little understanding try to impress the sub-conscious with worldly objects of desire; far-sighted men, knowing the perishable nature of worldly objects try to impress the sub-conscious with divine qualities, because these help them to attain the imperishable Super-conscious.

When the creative energy of the mind is active,

it does not allow the sub-conscious, which is unborn and imperishable, to manifest itself in the conscious. The sub-conscious is veiled by illusions and is not cognized by beings moving among the pairs of opposites which spring from attraction and repulsion. The sub-conscious is aware of the previous lives of men but it is itself unknown.

Those persons of determined purpose, whose sins have come to an end, and who are free from the delusive pairs of opposites direct their attention to the Embodied Self, so as to free themselves from the wheel of births and deaths. It is only such men who know the Eternal Reality (Brahma), its eternal nature (Adhyatma), and the actions it has to do (Karma). These are Karma-Sannyasins who try to know the Brahma by the process of involution. Those also, who, with mind controlled, associate the elements (Adhibhuta), the objective consciousness (Adhidaiva), and the Sacrifice of Himself in the body as sub-conscious (Adhiyajna), with the Super-conscious even just before their death, they, too, attain the Super-conscious state. These are Karma-Yogis who try to reach the Absolute by the process of evolution.

CHAPTER XII

The training of the sub-conscious in the realisation of Brahma (Akshara-brahma-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER VIII

In the previous chapters, the Author of the Gita explained the theory, knowledge and practice of action, and of the objective and subjective aspects of the mind. These teachings had made a great impression on Arjuna, as was shown by the sensible and intelligent questions he put to his Master in the course of discussion. His mental balance, which had been disturbed by the thought of fighting with those who were his teachers, elders and relations, was becoming more steady, but in order that it might become perfectly poised Sri Krishna wished to implant these teachings more firmly in his mind, and this could only be done by showing him how to assimilate them for himself. He wanted to excite Arjuna's curiosity as to the ways in which this could be done. and had just mentioned two of those ways at the end of the seventh chapter.

Arjuna showed his desire to gain this practical knowledge by asking a number of questions:—What is the sub-conscious self (Brahma); what knowledge should we have about it (Adhyatma); what actions

does it perform (Karma); what relation has it to the elements (Adhi-bhuta); what is objective consciousness (Adhi-daiva); what is the sacrifice in the body (Adhi-yajna); and how is the knower (Adhi-jnyeyam) to be known by the self-controlled at the time of death? The last question had not been suggested by what Sri Krishna had said in the preceding chapter, but arose in Arjuna's mind because he knew from the previous teaching that in the physical body there is some presiding deity that watches over and supervises all the activities of the mental and physical fields. These questions are all answered very briefly and simply in the verse:—"The Indestructible Supreme is the Super-conscious (Brahma); its manifestation (like its inherent nature of indestructibility) is sub-conscious (Adhyatma) in the body; and its emanations, which are manifested in the production of all things (animate and inanimate), are its actions (Karma)." These three statements refer to that which is without quality or form and is imperishable, the Nirguna Brahma, the Universal Soul according to the Vedantist. The next two refer to the Brahma with qualities, the Saguna Brahma and these are the replies:—the visible elements are the perishable manifestation of the Imperishable in the form of a body (Adhi-bhuta); conscious-self (Kshara Purusha, *i.e.*, Ahamkara) is their presiding deity (Adhidaiva); and myself (Sri Krishna as Super-conscious) am the principal sacrifice as the sub-conscious (Adhiyajna) in the body.

In reply to the last question Sri Krishna says:—"He only, who at the time of death, casting off the body, goes forth meditating upon the Super-conscious,

becomes merged into it." The self-controlled is he who has reached the stage of Savikalpa-Samadhi, that is, the stage in which all thought and activity in the physical body cease for a time, but not the sub-conscious activities which keep the body alive when the conscious activity ceases. Even if a man takes a whole life-time to reach the stage of Savikalpa-Samadhi, and is only able to awake the subjective consciousness in himself just before his death, he will nevertheless enjoy the fruits of this in the life to come by being able to merge the unified mind in the Super-conscious and thus reach the stage of Nirvikalpa-Samadhi where all desires are destroyed.

Arjuna next wanted to know the fate of those who have not reached the stage of Savikalpa-Samadhi, or who are not self-controlled. The answer to this is:—"With whatever thoughts we impress the sub-conscious at the time of death, with those same impressions the sub-conscious, the Embodied Soul, escapes from the body, attaches itself to that quality of Prakriti which resembles those impressions and is embodied again in order to realise them."

Sri Krishna now advises Arjuna, who already understands the working and the qualities of the sub-conscious aspect of the mind, to direct all his thoughts towards the sub-conscious so as to obtain inspiration for action.

When the mind with its creative energy, the objective consciousness, is thus set on the sub-conscious it ultimately becomes merged into it. This shows that by doing proper actions one can reach the Saguna Brahma.

The way to overcome the preliminary difficulty of controlling and training the objective mind to realise the subjective has already been explained in the sixth chapter.

Sri Krishna, after mentioning the great qualities of the sub-conscious, goes on to explain the methods necessary for training the sub-conscious mind to realise the Super-conscious:—He who, filled with reverence (for the Absolute) with a steady mind, and with the power that comes from uniting the conscious with the sub-conscious, concentrates the afferent impulses (Pranavayu) between the eye-brows (that is in the Udanaprana, which is a subsidiary nerve centre for all incoming and outgoing impulses in the body) and meditates on the Ancient (that is the super-conscious Self which is ever existing and unborn) the Omniscient (knowing the past, present and future), the Ordainer of things (regulating the actions of this life), the more minute than the minutest atom (as it is entirely invisible), the Supporter of all beings (keeping up the involuntary activity of the vital organs), the One of form unthinkable (invisible in the physical body), the Self-luminous like the Sun (resting on its inherent energy), and the One beyond the darkness of illusion (unaffected by past impressions), attains to that transcendental Divine Being, the Super-conscious. This method of merging one's self in the Supreme by concentrating all the energies of the body on a point at the root of the nose is practised by the self-controlled in order to destroy all the emotions of sub conscious origin. When the activities of the body, thought and emotions are controlled, the controlling energy is then directed to the worship of the Super-conscious (Nir

guna-Upasana) in order that it may be realised. The Yogi thus reaches what is known as the Nirguna stage, which is beyond the three qualities (Traigunyatita).

Another method is described for those who are doing actions with the mind controlled, and who desire to reach the Nirguna Brahma. This method consists of controlling the nine gates of the body, which are concerned with producing sensation, confining the mind in the heart, concentrating all afferent impulses in the head, uttering the one-syllabled *om*, and meditating on the Super-conscious. Those who dissociate themselves from the body by this process, they too reach the supreme goal and are no more subject to re-birth in a physical body, the everchanging home of misery.

Those who think there is nothing beyond the embodied Brahma, have their objective consciousness merged in the subjective, and, there being nothing further for the unified consciousness to meditate upon, return after a time to bodily form. They reach the stage of Saguna Brahma only (Sagunopasana).

These methods are practised by Hatha Yogis, who are of two classes, one class worshipping the Nirguna form (the Universal Soul) and the other the Saguna form (the Embodied Soul).

The Hatha Yogi who worships the Nirguna form takes one day of Brahma, which is equal to a thousand mortal years, to liberate his subjective consciousness by realisation of the Super-conscious, that is he must wait a thousand years in the Saguna form before achieving complete freedom. The Hatha Yogi who worships the Saguna form merges his objective con-

sciousness in the unmanifested sub-conscious for a night of Brahma, which is also equal to a thousand years, but at the beginning of the day of Brahma he returns to manifestation in a physical body.

From this we are led to infer that, beyond the unmanifested in the body (the Prakriti of Samkhya, or the Embodied Soul of the Vedantist, or the sub-conscious aspect of the mind in modern psychology), there is another unmanifest which is eternal and is not destroyed in the destruction of all beings. This is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable (the Mula-Prakriti of the Samkhya, the Universal Soul of the Vedantist, and the Super-conscious of modern psychology). It is the goal to be reached by all, and, once reached, none returns therefrom. This supreme goal is reached by intense devotion to that Unmanifested in whom all beings abide and by whom all the universe is pervaded.

The next is "the time wherein, going forth, Yogis return not, and also wherein, going forth they return." These verses, the 24th and 25th of the eighth chapter, have been differently interpreted by different critics. Very learned interpretations have been given by Sankaracharya, Dr. Annie Besant, and the late Lokmanya Tilak. These interpretations may be true, for they follow the traditions of the Srutis. However, I may be allowed to add an entirely different interpretation to the existing ones. The usual interpretation refers to the paths of the sun and moon in the sky. The position of the sun determines the time of year, and the position of the moon the particular fortnights in which the souls of Yogis, when liberated from their

bodies, will or will not reach the supreme goal. The souls which are liberated when the sun is in the northern hemisphere and the moon is increasing in light (the bright fortnight) reach the Eternal. Those liberated when the sun is in the southern hemisphere and the moon is decreasing in light (the dark fortnight) do not reach the Eternal, but come back to go once more along the path of evolution and involution. The Yogi, who according to the statement made elsewhere in the Gita, is to reach the supreme Brahma must be in the state of Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, and when he is in that state he is supposed to have conquered time. Why then should he have to wait for a certain physical period before he can liberate his soul?

To my mind the idea of a certain definite time for liberation is inconceivable. It is not length of time nor the position of the sun or moon in the sky that makes a Yogi able to liberate his soul to join the Super-conscious, the Supreme Eternal, but his concious meditation. It may be argued in favour of the traditional interpretation that even Bhishma, when he was fatally wounded by Arjuna, waited for the sun's return to the northern solstice for the liberation of his soul in order that he might reach Para-Brahma. It is possible, however, to apply the words Uttarayana and Dakshinayana to other things than the movements of the sun, and likewise, the words Shukla and Krishna do not necessarily mean the phases of the moon. They may be interpreted to mean the paths in the body which a Yogi takes to reach Brahma and Para-Brahma, the conscious and unconscious paths dependent on the nervous systems of the body.

The nervous systems are of two kinds, one which is under the control of the will and is called the cerebro-spinal system and the other, the autonomic nervous system, which is not normally under our control.

The autonomic nervous system, which is blackish in colour, lies in front of the cerebro-spinal system and is called the Dakshinayana path. The cerebro-spinal system is whitish in colour and is called the Uttarayana path. Unless a conscious control over the Dakshinayana path is established (and a Hatha-Yogi generally accomplishes this in six months by directing the energy of control on to it by the Uttarayana path), a Yogi cannot reach the desired goal. When the physical activity is controlled, we can, to a certain extent, control the activity of the mind and direct the energy of control to the realisation of the sub-conscious. This is comparatively easy to achieve, as all visible physical activity is under our conscious control through the voluntary or cerebro-spinal nervous system; but the invisible activities, such as respiration and the beating of the heart, which keep the body alive, are unconscious, that is not under our conscious control. The suppression of physical activity, without control of the autonomic system, fails after a time and the individual returns to contact with the surrounding objects of sense in order to carry on his usual avocations. This is not what is desired by a Yogi who is desirous of reaching Para-Brahma. He is told, therefore, to control consciously the autonomic nervous system, the Dakshinayana or anterior path, so as to bring all the involuntary actions of the body under the control of

the will. This can only be done by wakening to conscious activity the dormant smouldering Kundalini, which is the main portion of the Dakshinayana path, so that its energy, the fire, can be directed towards the Sushumna (the spinal cord) which is the basis of the Uttarayana or posterior path, that is the cerebrospinal system.

The dormant Kundalini is controlled by the Hatha Yogic practices of Pranayama, Asana, Bandha and Mudra; these make the Kundalini impressionable, and direct the force of its fire along the conscious part of the nervous system. When this conscious control over Kundalini is obtained, the individual practically controls all the conscious and subconscious activities of the body and reaches the state of Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, in which he can liberate the Embodied Brahma to join the Supreme.

This is why Bhishma, who, according to his own statement, was a Hatha Yogi. waited till he could direct the fire on the sun—Kundalini—to the Uttarayana, or posterior path, in order that he might reach his goal. He could not so direct the fire immediately after his severe wound, and if he had liberated his embodied soul at once, when the fire of Kundalini was in the Dakshinayana path, he would not have been freed from his sub-conscious activities. and would have had to come to life again to exhaust his past Karma.

This explanation of the working of Kundalini makes the interpretation of these two verses easier: A Hatha Yogi, desirous of reaching the Supreme Brahma, is able after six month's practice to direct the white flame of Kundalini along the conscious Uttarayana path and reach the Eternal and never

returns to the created world; while a Hatha Yogi, who has no definite aim allows the black smoke of the smouldering Kundalini to travel along the Dakshina yana path and in six months reaches the region of the moon, that is the moon-shaped cavity in the brain, where Udana-Prana, which controls the incoming and outgoing impulses is located. Having reached that he returns to his former self. A Yogi who knows these paths has no hesitation in choosing the right one by which to reach the Eternal. Sri Krishna therefore advises Arjuna at all times to be constant in the practice of Yoga, and to direct the mind, made steady by practice, towards liberation (Moksha). A Hatha Yogi, who knows the Embodied Self, rises above all meritorious deeds prescribed in the Vedas, all sacrifices, all austerities, and even almsgiving and reaches the Supreme Abode.

CHAPTER XIII

The secret way of realising subjective consciousness (Brahma)
(Raja-vidya-raja-guhya-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER IX

In the last chapter the control of the unconscious activities of the body was explained, but simple control of the unconscious and of unconscious activities is not enough to enable one to reach the Supreme Brahma, it is only useful in gaining the mental and physical poise which is undisturbed by impressions whether from without or from the Embodied Self within. Emotions and memory are sub-conscious activities, rising into conscious manifestation when stimulated by contacts with objects from without. Sri Krishna, without reminding Arjuna of the original cause of his depression, led him to control his emotions, which made him nervous on the battlefield, by training his sub-conscious mind. The Lord's next effort was to direct the pent-up energy arising from repressed emotions towards the realisation of that superior force, the Super-conscious—the Impersonal Brahman, by uniting with which one is freed from re-birth. This could not be effected all at once; Arjuna had to be led to it by stages. First he was taught the philosophy of control of the objective consciousness, then the direction of the energy thus obtained to the realisation of the divine nature of the sub-conscious. Next after he had learnt to merge the

objective in the subjective, he was directed to control the sub-conscious by constant meditation. The next step is to direct the energy thus accumulated to the realisation of the Super-conscious Self-Impersonal (Nirguna) Brahma. The Lord Krishna now proceeds to explain the method of attaining this last stage.

The realisation of the Embodied Self—Atman—is more difficult than that of the Universal Self. The Universal Self is known through the mind, as an external object, while the Embodied Self is not externally realised. To us our own self is more real than the Universal Self, as it is the very foundation on which the whole fabric of our experience is based. The Author of the Gita rightly calls it the most profound secret,—that which when known, brings liberation. Men without faith in this knowledge do not reach the Super-conscious, but return to the path of re-birth. It is the highest science and the greatest mystery; it is also the best means of obtaining sanctification. It is realisable by direct perception, it is endowed with merit, it is easy to practise, it is imperishable.

All this world, Sri Krishna says, is pervaded by the unmanifested Super-conscious; all entities rest in That; but That is not in them, nor do all beings rest in That, such is Divine Super-conscious. It supports all beings through the sub-conscious, and produces all beings by joining with Prakriti, and yet it does not dwell in them. This paradoxical statement that all beings live in the Super-conscious and yet do not live in That, can be explained in the following way:—As the Super-conscious pervades the whole universe, it encircles all animate and inanimate things; but

though it pervades all things, it does not produce them —they are produced by Prakriti, through the activated energy of the Super-conscious. Thus, though it is the cause of all things, it does not produce them out of itself, and they do not dwell in it. The Super-conscious pervades all, just as air pervades space. At the end of a cycle of activity (Kalpa) all beings are merged with the Prakriti from which they were emanated; and at the beginning of a cycle the Super-conscious animates its own divine nature, Prakriti, to send out into the world again a whole multitude of beings, who are helplessly under the control of the impressions received in their past lives (Prakritervashat). The activities of beings in any life, which are the result of their past impressions, do not bind the Super-conscious, as they do not proceed from it. It is, therefore, entirely unconcerned with their activities. Nature (Prakriti) gives birth to all movable and immovable things, but it is the Unknowable Super-conscious which acts as supervisor and thereby causes the whole world to revolve. This explains the relation between the Super-conscious and Universal Nature.

Deluded people, with vain hopes, vain acts, vain knowledge, whose minds are deluded by the objects of sense, and who, as a result of past acts, are materially or waywardly disposed, are led into error by this demoniacal nature in them; not knowing that the Super-conscious is the cause of all beings, they cannot recognise its existence when embodied in human form. These deluded people are called vain because they think that all mental and physical activities are created by the physical self. It is only the spiritually-

minded people, who are inclined towards the divine qualities in Nature, who know that Embodied Super-conscious is the inexhaustible cause of all desired objects, and who worship it with unwavering mind.

The Author of the Gita points out the methods to be used for the realisation of the Atman, after the objective consciousness has been trained by the physical processes of Pranayama and Asana, as explained in the sixth chapter. Three ways are suggested, for individuals of different evolutionary attainments. One is the process of merging the objective consciousness in the sub-conscious so as to imbibe its divine qualities by the absolute control of the mind (Laya Yoga). The second is by continually glorifying the Embodied Super-conscious by suitable incantations, combined with a firm resolve to merge the objective consciousness in the subjective (Mantra Yoga). The third method is by sacrificing all knowledge of the external world and so making the sub-conscious unimpressionable. This last is achieved in two ways—by unifying (Ekatwena) the objective with the subjective by control of the organs of sense and action, *i.e.*, the metaphysical method (Samkhya Yoga)—or by keeping the sub-conscious apart (Prithaktwena) from the influence of the surrounding objects of sense by direct control of the mind (Dhyana Yoga). This is the Hatha Yogic method. In Laya Yoga it is faith in the working of the sub-conscious; in Mantra Yoga, the determination to reach the sub-conscious; and in Hatha Yoga the control of the body and mind becomes the means of the realisation of the sub-conscious. Those who know any of these three methods (Trayi-vidya) of

realisation of the Atman, having purified the mind, centre all the conscious and sub-conscious activities of the body at a point that is bathed in the cerebro-spinal fluid (Soma) secreted by the moonshaped ventricles of the brain—or in the language of Yoga, they carry their soul to Brahma-randhra as a preliminary to its liberation; there they enjoy for a time celestial pleasures, and when their merit is exhausted they return to the material world. The inference is that by these ways one can reach only the stage of Savi-kalpa-Samadhi, as the aim of those who practise them is to reach only the Embodied Self and not the Self beyond. They practise them with a desire or motive, and as soon as that has been fulfilled, they return to their mortal existence. All these are worshippers of Saguna Brahma, and they are not liberated from re-birth.

Those who worship their Embodied Self, not as a separate entity, but as part of the Super-conscious (Nirguna Brahma) in every being, attain their liberation, if not in this life then in the lives to come. Even those who take their divine inspiration from the Embodied Self of others, with full faith in their powers (as Arjuna was taking his from Sri Krishna), they too reach the Super-conscious though by a circuitous way not knowing that they have the same Embodied Self as the other. In this way Sri Krishna tries to teach Arjuna that he has an Embodied Self in himself but that the objective consciousness has broken the connection with it by attaching too much importance to the objects of sense. It is the sub-conscious self that liberates all actions and enjoys their fruits,

but, not knowing that this self is a part of the Super-conscious, men worship the sub-conscious as the final entity to be reached and thus return into the mortal world. Worshippers of the external objects of sense (Bhuta) realise those objects, that is, they gain the objects of desire by impressing the sub-conscious with them; worshippers of the Ancient Self (Pitri) obtain the realisation of Self (the sub-conscious); votaries of the organs of sense (Devata) get the satisfaction of their senses; but worshippers of the Super-conscious become merged in it. The simple worship of these different objects will not enable us to attain them, there must be deep feeling (Bhava), or living faith (Shraddha), or determination (Chetah) or devotion (Bhakti)—by these only do we receive what we persist in expecting. The more faith we have in our ultimate realisation and attainment of that which has qualities of superiority and worth, the more surely do we implant in our sub-conscious those mental seeds that can and will bring us the greater good that we desire. The Lord, therefore, advises Arjuna to think always of the Atman in all his actions, whether eating, offering gifts, giving alms, or performing penance. This constant thinking of the sub-conscious self as the creator in the midst of our activities controls our objective consciousness and directs our mind to the realisation of the sub-conscious self and its qualities and not to the result of action, and so we are freed from the bonds of action. When the objective is thus merged with the subjective by the renunciation of its past impressions, it is freed to join its like, the Super-conscious.

The sub-conscious self is the same in everyone.

It is not partial in its embodiment, but it is only in those who worship with faith that there is mutual intermingling of the Super and the Sub-conscious selves. Even the most sinful, if with undivided heart he directs the creative energy of the mind towards the realisation of the Super-conscious, should be considered righteous, for his resolve is right. He may not succeed immediately in its realisation, but, after a few lives of constant devotion to his sub-conscious self, he will obtain everlasting tranquillity, his efforts to reach the Super-conscious cannot be wasted. Those who are determined to reach the Super-conscious state, taking refuge in their own Embodied Self, tread the highest path even if they are women of lust (Papayonayah-striyah, *i.e.*, prostitutes) or those born to carry on action for the upkeep of the physical body (Vaishyas), or those living among the objects of sense (Shudras); what then need be said of those whose minds are spiritually directed (Brahmins) or of those who live amid the splendours of the objects of sense without being attached to them (Rajarshis)? So Sri Krishna now exhorts Arjuna to direct his mind, not towards the realisation of this transient unhappy world, but towards the realisation of the Embodied Super-conscious Self, which is full of bliss.

In the four verses 16 to 19 are enumerated all the abstract functions with which the sub-conscious self is associated. It is the power (Kratu), the will (Swadha) that sacrifices and liberates all impressions (Yajnya); it is the creeper (Aushadhi), that is, the autonomic nervous system; it is the power of speech (Mantra); it is the one to whom the oblation (Ajyam) of impressions of the present life is offered; it is the fire, the

power of the Kundalini, in the body; and it is the sub-conscious self that is to be offered as a sacrifice (Hutam) in order to obtain full emancipation; it is the generator and sustainer of the bodily universe (Jagat); it is the object to be known; it is the means of sanctification; in it reside the power of command, intuition (Omkara), the splendour (Rik), the conciliation (Sama), and also the rejoicing (Yajur); it is fate (Gati), the creator (Bharta), the Lord (Prabhu) and the witness (Sakshi); it is the welcome abode of shelter; it is the substratum from which arise all our actions and in which they disappear; it is the imperishable storehouse (Nidhana) of the seeds of impressions; it is the source of the heat of the body; it regulates the rain (*i.e.*, the secretions of the body); it prolongs and destroys life; it is being and non-being, and though it is in the body its presence is not felt.

The whole teaching about the realisation of the Atman, the Embodied Self, is summed up in the last verse of this chapter: "Direct the mind towards the sub-conscious self, with full faith, sacrifice all impressions from outside, obey it in the performance of actions. Having thus harmonised oneself with the sub-conscious with the desire of reaching the Super-conscious one reaches the Supreme Goal."

CHAPTER XIV

Realisation of the Super-consciousness
(Brahma-jnyana-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER X

The Author of the Gita, having described the various processes of impressing and meditating upon the sub-conscious now, explains the origin of it, so that this knowledge may help Arjuna in his practical exercises.

The origin of the primal being—the Super-conscious—is Unknowable, even to the Gods and Rishis who are supposed to have reached the state of bliss; for otherwise, though they are all the product of the Unknowable, it might be assumed by analogy that the Unknowable too had a creator. Sri Krishna removes this doubt by saying: "He who knows it to be unborn, without beginning, the Supreme Lord of the World, is liberated from all sin." All the various mental and physical characteristics which are seen in men—intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure, pain, existence and non-existence, fear, courage, harmlessness, equanimity, content, austerity, almsgiving, fame and disgrace, all come from the nature of the Super-conscious. The seven Great Rishis, the Ancient Four, and also the Manus were born of the Super-conscious by its creative force, and from them the whole world is

generated. He who knows in reality the manifold emanations of the Super-conscious and its power of creating them will undoubtedly become attached to it because of his unswerving devotion. Having once understood that the Super-conscious is the originator of everything, and that all things are evolved out of it, wise men adore it with full devotion and determine to reach it.

Who are the seven Rishis, four Ancients and the Manus (said to be fourteen) who are said to be concerned in the creation of the various characteristics of men and things?

A reference to the seven Rishis and the Ancient Four is found in the Brihadaranyak-upanishad. If we add them all together, they make twenty-five, and they are probably identical with the principal Tatwas into which the philosophy of Kapila divides the Universe. The Ancient Four, who have had previous germinal existence before the birth of the physical body and who form a part of every being in his foetal life, are eternal in their existence. Their desire to watch on and know the human race makes them undergo continuous re-births. Two of them are located in the mental field, and the other two in the physical field. The two that belong to the mental field are the subconscious self (Kshetrajnya) and the sub-conscious material (Para-Prakriti) with the divine qualities. The two in the physical body are the impulses (Vayu) flowing along the nerves of the body, and space (Akasha) which is embodied. These germinal parts, which are latent in the foetal body, are excited to activity by the Cosmic Energy (Brahman) which comes in con-

tact with the body after its birth into the physical world.

The excitation of the sub-conscious by the Cosmic Energy makes it unite with the sub-conscious material and results in the manifestation of Prana which makes up the mental field. This Prana establishes its relations with the outside world and brings into existence Egoism (Ahamkara), objective material (Buddhi), and the mind (Manas), that is, a portion of the Apara-Prakriti, as well as the seven Rishis, who carry on the inspired functions of hearing, seeing, smelling and taste. These seven Rishis are the two openings of the eyes, two of the ears, two of the nostrils and one of the mouth. Without Prana they remain inactive and are not able to carry impressions to the sub-conscious self. In the physical field, two of the gross elements (Mahabhutas) which are embodied as germinal seeds (Vayu and Akasha) are stimulated to activity by the Cosmic Energy to bring to life the remaining three gross elements, Prithivi, Apas, and Tejas, that is, the remaining half of the Apara-Prakriti.

The working of the six gross manifestations of Prana—Ahamkara, Buddhi, and the mind in the mental field, and Prithivi, Apas and Tejas in the physical field—is regulated by the sub-conscious self according to the impressions it receives in the present life or has received in the past through the organs of knowledge (Rishis). Realisation of that working is gained through the five organs of action and the sense of touch. The Manus, who are said to be the legislators of the race, should then be taken to mean the Karma of an individual, together with Prana,

Ahamkara, Buddhi, the mind, Prithivi, Apas, Tejas, the five organs of action and the sense of touch. The combination of these fourteen regulates the working of the body which is brought to life by the creative energy of the universal Soul entering the body as the chief impulse (Prana-vayu).

Those who direct all their thoughts and energies to meditation on the Universal Self, liberate both their physical body and Embodied Self eternally. They, becoming united to the embodied Super-conscious, obtain the power of intuition (Buddhi-Yoga) and perform good actions which tend to liberation. Ignorance of the Embodied Self, born of living in too great attachment to the objects of sense, is destroyed by this knowledge of its origin.

In this 10th verse, Sri Krishna (as the Embodied Super-consciousness) assures his disciple Arjuna (as the objective consciousness) that those who are attached and devoted to him (*i.e.*, Sri Krishna), no matter how sinful their 'Prarabdha' (*i.e.*, "Karma" or action about to fructify) may be, He lowers Himself from the high pedestal in the body at the proper time of its discharge, and joins their conscious selves with a view to create divine qualities in them so that ultimately the bad effect of their "Karma" is averted.

This is nothing but an indirect hint to Arjuna to carry on the fight with full faith in his Master.

When this knowledge of the origin, working, qualities and functions of the Embodied Self had been imparted to Arjuna, he was perfectly satisfied with the teachings of his Master. Up to this time he had regarded the Lord Krishna in his human form as a friend and equal and so had not been inclined

to attach any great importance to his metaphysical teachings. We also are often inclined not to put much reliance on advice given to us by our equals or inferiors, but when that same advice is given to us by our superiors in knowledge and intelligence we listen to it and believe in it. So Arjuna, when he became aware of his Embodied Self through his Master's teaching, was immediately convinced that that Master was no ordinary being and, recognising his superiority, he ascribed to him all the terms of which he has just learned the significance. "You are the Supreme Eternal (Brahma), you are the abode to be reached by men, you are the holiest of the holy, you are the Eternal Divine Being (Purusha), the primeval deity (the Super-conscious), the unborn, the Lord. These are the forms in which Rishis and Divine Rishis have acclaimed you, and now I hear about them from you."

Arjuna had so far had doubts as to the all-pervasiveness of his Master, the personified Super-conscious, but he knows this now to be true, for his manifestations cannot be comprehended by the objects of sense (Danava) or by the organs of sense (Deva). He is now anxious to know the various manifestations of the Super-conscious which pervade the whole universe, how the Super-conscious is to be recognised by constant meditation, and in what direction its manifestations should be looked for. He also wishes to hear again all about the power and glory of the Super-conscious, although this had already been told, for, he says, he is never tired of listening to such life-giving words.

CHAPTER XV

The emanations of the Super-conscious state (Vibhuti-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER X (*Continued.*)

Arjuna has by now unified the two aspects of his mind and is anxious to know more of the Super-conscious state. He wishes to know to what emanations of the Super-conscious he should direct his unified self in order that it might become merged into it. These emanations are innumerable; it is not possible to meditate on all of them at once, so he asks on what special form of emanation he should concentrate his energy so that he might achieve liberation.

Sri Krishna was satisfied with the progress his disciple had made in the mental field and expressed his joy at the effect of his teachings by the word "Hanta." He then begins to enumerate his various emanations in all manifested and unmanifested forms —the Embodied Self (Atma) in beings, Vishnu among divinities (Aditya), Marichi among winds (Marut), the Moon among asteroids (Nakshatra), Sama-veda among Vedas, Indra among Gods (Deva), the mind among the senses, consciousness (Chetana) in beings, Sankar among the celestial beings, Lord of Wealth among demons of riches (Yaksha-Rakshasa), Pavaka among fires, Meru among high mountains, Brihaspati among priests, Skanda among generals, the Ocean among

Lakes, Bhrigu among Rishis, the one-syllabled OM in speech, the Himalayas among mountains, Kapila among perfected Munis, Asvattha among trees, the Monarch among men, Uchchaishravas among horses, Airavata among elephants, the Thunderbolt among weapons, Kamadhuk among cows, Kandarpa among progenitors, Vasuki among serpents, the Science of Self among sciences, and the Orator among speakers. These and many other emanations of the Super-conscious are given in verses 19 to 40 of the tenth chapter; they are so many that it is impossible to enumerate them all, but the few that are mentioned are illustrative of its divine glory. They are all summed up in the sentence; whatever is glorious, good, beautiful and awe-inspiring in nature and being, comes forth from a fragment of the splendour of the Super-conscious that is embodied in them. Another way of expressing it is that whatever thrills and stirs us to our very soul, our sub-consciousness, is an emanation of the Super-conscious, which awakens our subjective consciousness and produces the sensations, delightful or terrible that we are experiencing.

When we know what subjective consciousness is, and realise the sensations we have had, we can lift the mind to the field of the finer forces at will. The process by which this is done has been described in the chapters dealing with the metaphysical (Samkhya) and psychic (Yoga) methods of training the mind.

In the metaphysical method a knowledge of the working of the mental field is essential in order to excite the subjective consciousness by direct impressions from outside. The other method is a study

of the different planes of vibration, with a view to gaining a perfect understanding of each plane. The control of physical actions takes the mind away from the lowest plane of vibration, the organs of sense, to the plane of objective vibrations, where it is made steady by determination. When that plane is fully mastered, the mind, by faith, is carried to the higher plane of subjective vibrations where it absorbs the divine qualities and understands the working of the subjective consciousness.

The consciousness of this plane excites the finer forces of the body which help to control one's sub-conscious activities and to achieve and comprehend all that is best or worst in the nature, Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic, which is attached to the Embodied Super-consciousness. The individual then becomes an emanation (Vibhuti) of the highest plane of the Super-conscious. When this stage is reached, the mind, liberated from attachments, is carried to the highest plane of vibrations, which is ethereal and above the finer physical forces of the body; here it gains by intense devotion the supreme goal (Moksha).

This is the path which Sri Krishna advises his disciple to follow. It is the path of involution where the gross is made to merge into the subtle. This process runs all through the teachings of the Gita. First the effects or visible manifestations are described, then the process of controlling those manifestations, and then the knowledge of what caused those effects to be manifested. When the knowledge of the cause has been brought to the consciousness, it establishes a control over the creative power of the mind and

brings the finer consciousness to the front. Control of the sub-conscious aspect excites subjective consciousness which is liberated to join the Super-conscious by virtue of conscious interest in its realisation.

It is precisely this teaching of the Gita that is taken advantage of in the Western New Thought literature, which however, aims at making an individual the creature of his desires, whether good or bad. Knowing that the all-pervading limitless Super-consciousness is embodied as the sub-conscious, but not believing in its divine nature, the creative energy of the mind, with the image of the object desired, is projected on the sub-conscious with great intensity of feeling. This rouses the dormant subjective consciousness to activity, which in due course directs the physical activity towards the achievement of the object desired. This is a process of evolution without any control of the mind, and binds a man to results, and so by this method, according to the teachings of the Gita, there cannot be that liberation of the Embodied which prevents re-birth.

Because the mind is controlled in the process of involution for reaching Moksha, there is no impressing of the sub-conscious so as to generate new Karma (Kriyamana). By merging the objective with the subjective, the accumulated Karma of past lives (Sanchit) is given effect to. When all the accumulated Karma is exhausted by liberation to action the Yogi is free from re-birth.

The force of the sub-conscious within us is such that if we arouse it to consciousness in the right way, we achieve what the teachings of the Gita are given

to help us to achieve—liberation from re-birth, the home of pain and misery. Sri Krishna therefore rightly says to Arjuna, "What is knowledge of these details of my emanations to you? Worship that fragment of me in the form of the sub-conscious self with which I pervade this (bodily) universe" and so answers his disciple's question: "In what aspect should I worship you to reach liberation (Moksha)."

CHAPTER XVI

The vision of the Super-conscious
(Vishwa-rupa-darsana-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER XI

Arjuna has by now learnt from his Master everything that ought to be known about the mental states, and has put it into practice. The war between the two personified consciousnesses is almost at an end, and Sri Krishna, the personified Super-conscious, has, by analysis, reasoning and argument established his authority over Arjuna the personified objective consciousness, for Arjuna states that his delusion has disappeared. He now wishes to see what has produced this change, to see and experience the Super-conscious state as it is seen by those who have freed themselves from worldly trammels and obtained Moksha. His desire to realise the Self which is unknown to the senses, to reason or to memory had been satisfied by the simile of the still and moving air existing in space, which had been given by the Lord (IX-6).

Arjuna had learnt from Sri Krishna about the production and dissolution of things, and about his own inexhaustible greatness, and although he believed what he had heard, still he was not quite sure about the Super-conscious being the Creator of the

Universe, so he asked:—"O Supreme Lord, I desire to see Thine Omnipotent form, even as Thou hast described Thyself to me, as the greatest of all beings. If Thou thinkest me to be capable of seeing it, O Lord of Yogis, show me Thy imperishable form."

Sri Krishna knew what was in Arjuna's mind, and understood that if his desire to see the Superconscious form was not granted, he would always have a lingering doubt about his great creative power, and would lose faith in all that had been said to compose his mind. So, having the welfare of his disciple at heart, the Lord agreed to show him his Eternal form and so remove all his doubts and impress the truths already taught so firmly on his mind that there should be no more delusion. He, therefore, told Arjuna that he should see his hundreds and thousands of celestial forms of various shapes and colours, and many more marvels, which no one had seen before. He told him to notice especially the shining mass of splendour formed by the twelve suns (Adityas), and the speed with which it is revolving (I think the word "Maruta" here implies the quality of speed), the various vital airs (Vasus) and fires of destruction (Rudras), that are produced from it, as well as the day and night of Brahma(Asvinau) that is the beginning and end of the universe.

Arjuna wishes to know when and how he is to see all this and is told to see it in Sri Krishna's body; there he should see the whole universe with all its movable and immovable objects, and everything else that he desired to see. But as he could not see it with his mortal eyes, Sri Krishna gave him for the

time the gift of Super-conscious sight (Divyachakshu) by lifting him to that state of accomplishment (Siddhi) which opens the divine vision to see the form Omnipotent.

Then follows a vivid description of the Super-conscious state and what Arjuna saw there—a form all wonderful, resplendent, all-pervading, with many mouths and eyes, with many divine ornaments, with celestial weapons uplifted, wearing the celestial necklace and vestures, anointed with celestial unguents. The splendour of the form could only be compared to the lustre of a thousand suns rising in the sky all at once. There, in the body of this form, Arjuna saw the whole universe at once with its manifold divisions. He was overwhelmed with wonder at the sight, and with hair upstanding, he bowed before the Lord with joined palms, and described what he saw.

He saw all the Gods and other groups of divine beings; he saw Brahma, the embodied form of the Super-conscious, seated upon the lotus throne; he saw all the Rishis, that is the embodied beings who help humanity to draw near to the Super-conscious, and all the serpents that is the objects of sense that draw men to the lower world. He saw a divine form possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes on all sides, but he could not see any beginning, middle or end to it. He saw this form with coronet, mace and discus, like a brilliant mass of light, difficult to look at, blazing on all sides with the effulgence of the sun.

Having seen this awe-inspiring form Arjuna worshipped it saying: "Thou art the Imperishable, the

Supreme, the great Supporter of the Universe. Thou art the undying Guardian of the Imperishable Dharma, the embodied Brahma, and I believe Thee to be Eternal. (Dharma here should be taken to mean that which remains after the body perishes, that is the sub-conscious). I seee Thee without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power, of manifold arms, having the sun and the moon for eyes, and blazing fire for mouth, filling up the universe with Thy splendour. By Thee alone are filled the heavens, the earth and the space between them. Beholding thus Thy marvellous and awful form, O possessor of the mighty body, the three worlds tremble with fear. Lo! these groups of beings having divine qualities are merging within Thee tremblingly, with joined palms, while the groups of sages (those Jnyanis who have merged themselves into the sub-conscious state), as well as the Siddhas (who have obtained entrance into that state by Yoga practices, are satisfied with the result of their effort), worship Thee with hymns of praise. All these beings in various grades of mental development, whose desires are not fully controlled, who are on a level with the Rudras, Adityas, Vasus and others, who are making an effort to merge themselves into their embodied Super-conscious, are gazing at Thee with amazement. Beholding Thy mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, O mighty-armed one, with many, arms, thighs and feet, with many fearful jaws, the worlds quake and so do I."

When he saw this terrible awe-inspiring form with fearful jaws flaming with the fires of destruction, Arjuna's innermost soul began to quake, he had no courage left in him, and his comfort was destroyed.

He, therefore, cried for mercy to the Refuge of all Worlds. His fear was increased when he saw in the body of this form, the sons of Dhritarashtra, together with a multitude of kings, Bhishma, Drona, Karna and the warriors on his side all rushing into that awful mouth. He saw the blazing mouth licking, crushing and swallowing these warriors. He was amazed at the sight and wondered whether this could be the same person who created and sustained the Universe, or whether it was some other who destroyed it. He asked, "Who art Thou in this fierce form? I salute Thee. Have mercy on me, for I do not understand this aspect of Thine. I desire to understand it, O Primeval One."

Sri Krishna answered: "I am death, the destroyer of the world, fully manifest and active here to destroy all these people. None of these warriors here assembled to fight will escape death but you." The Lord thus assures Arjuna of his victory and so removes the doubt that had been one of the causes of his depression, and exhorts him to fight and obtain glory and enjoy a prosperous kingdom by vanquishing his foes. He assures Arjuna that his enemies have already been killed in the invisible Superconscious state, and urges that now he should fight fearlessly and crush his rivals on the field of battle and be the outward physical cause of their destruction.

Having heard these words, Arjuna prostrated himself with folded arms at the feet of his Master.

So far the luminous (Aditya) and destructive (Rudra) aspects of the Super-conscious have been described. Arjuna now describes what he sees of the preservative aspects. "To Thy preservative care

(Sthane), O Lord of Sense, the universe is entrusted and it rejoices in Thy praise; the Rakshasas (men under the control of their organs of sense) fly terror-stricken in all directions; all the hosts of Siddhas (men who have controlled their objective consciousness) bow down to Thee. And why should they not, O high-souled One? For Thou art greater than Brahma, the primal cause, O Lord of Gods! Thou art the imperishable Sat (Sub-conscious state), the perishable Asat (conscious state), as well as That (Tat) Supreme (Super-conscious state), which is beyond them. Thou art the primal cause, the ancient Being (Atman) in men. Thou art the Supreme Refuge. Thou art the Knower, the object to be known, and the supreme goal to be reached. O Infinite Form! by Thee the Universe is pervaded. Thou art the Vayu (Vitaliser), Yama (destroyer), Agni (Kundalini), Varuna (divine fluid), the Moon (Moon-shaped cavity in the brain), Prajapati (subsidiary nerve centre in the brain known as Thalamus,) and Prapitamaha (the great-grand-father, *i.e.*, the brain). Hail, hail to Thee, a thousand times, all hail." The words Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna and the Moon all have reference to the Kundalini, which is under the influence of the sub-conscious mind, and whose working is involuntary.

When this primeval form of his personified Master was seen by Arjuna, he was sorry that he had unknowingly called him "Krishna," "Yadava," "friend," carelessly and ignorantly, not knowing his greatness, and asks to be forgiven for any disrespect he may have shown him while walking, resting, sitting or at meals, when alone or with others. He now recognises

him to be the Father of the world and of all movable and immovable things, far greater than the great, having no equal in all the worlds. He was amazed at what he saw, but also he was afraid and asked Sri Krishna to return to his usual form.

This primeval form was shown by Sri Krishna by virtue of his own mysterious powers. Arjuna could not see it by his physical sight as he had not yet reached the state of liberation; none of the Yogis who had gone before had seen it, nor would any who came after. Sri Krishna then re-assumed his usual form.

The realisation of the Super-conscious state is not attainable by renunciation of action (Yajnya), or by the acquisition of knowledge of the Vedas (Jnyana), or by performance of action (Kriya), or by severe austerities (Tapas) as practised by the Hatha Yogis, or by making the gift of the fruits of action (Dana). Sri Krishna says: "I cannot be seen as you have seen me by means of the knowledge of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor by gifts, nor yet by sacrifice; only by intense devotion to me alone can I be truly known and assimilated."

He who performs actions to propitiate the Super conscious, he who has That for his God, who is devoted to That and has no enmity towards any, he alone is liberated.

Just as Sri Krishna had prescribed Chetas as the means by which the objective consciousness could be reached, and Shraddha as the means for reaching the subjective, so now he prescribes Bhakti for reaching the Super-conscious.

CHAPTER XVII

The ways of realising the Super-conscious (Bhakti-yoga)

GITA CHAPTER XII

In Chapters VIII, IX and X of the Gita, the Author showed us the ways by which the sub-conscious state could be reached as a preparation for becoming merged in the Super-conscious, while, in the last verses of the eleventh chapter, he shows that the Super-conscious can be reached without being merged in the sub-conscious, but only by the path of devotion.

Arjuna raises the question: which is the better Yoga, to merge oneself directly in the Super-conscious, or indirectly through the embodied soul (sub-conscious)?

In answer to Arjuna's query, Sri Krishna says that the best Yoga is attained by devotion (Bhakti-marga) though the Super-conscious can be reached by other ways also. In Bhakti-marga the knowledge of the inner working of the mind is not essential, so that even the most ignorant can avail himself of it to reach the Super-conscious. He merges his objective consciousness directly in the Super-conscious ignoring the unmanifested embodied soul in the body. But to achieve the goal, three essentials are mentioned by the propounder of the Gita, *viz.*, intensity of faith (Shraddha), constancy (Nitya-yukta) and

concentration on the object of devotion (Mayyaveshya manas). In Bhakti-marga the devotee begins with the complete surrender of his conscious-self to the Lord who is his sole Refuge. He obeys and serves him and seeks nothing in return, not even the expansion of his own self, though it does come automatically to him.

The other way of reaching the Super-conscious is through the unmanifested embodied soul (Sub-conscious). The knowledge of the inner working of the mind is essential to reach the goal and this makes the path difficult. Besides the Unmanifest is too difficult to comprehend. It is beyond vision, thought and designation. It baffles and eludes all attempts at conception. It is inconceivable and, as such, it is extremely difficult and trying to persons who are engaged in achieving redemption through it. Yet Sri Krishna says that unmanifested sub-conscious can be reached by renouncing all actions and merging the objective consciousness in the sub-conscious by meditation (Dhyana) taking to be Supreme Brahma. This path of reaching the Unmanifest is possible for Jnyana-Yogis who are evolutionarily far advanced in life. They renounced all objectivity to awaken the subjectivity which is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind. The Jnyana-Yogi seeks his redemption by exhausting his past Karma. Though living in a physical form he is not attached to it. He is called Jivan Mukta—liberated though still living.

Of these two Yogis, the devotee (Bhakta) surrenders his self to him (Super-conscious) while the Jnyani surrenders nothing to him but seeks its ex-

pansion in his attempt to realise the Unmanifest in the body which Shastras proclaim "Tat-Twam-Asi" (Thou art that). Both, however, attain the same goal. The devotee's path runs through the mental field and is shorter but more difficult owing to the fluidity of the mind mentioned by Arjuna in the Gita Chapter VI. It is, therefore, hard for the physical self to reach the highest state. The devotee is the result of many cycles of birth. The Jnyani's path runs through the physical field; it is longer, but easier to achieve by practice.

The second process is a gradual one, carrying an individual by graded steps to the Unmanifested Super-conscious state by controlling the mind and restraining the organs of sense. The controlled mind, with its creative energy the objective consciousness, is then directed with intense desire (Shraddha) towards the sub-conscious, the Embodied Self, and merged into it. This merging puts an end to all new Karma (Kriyamana), and destroys the manifestations of all past Karmas (Sanchit and Prarabdha). When the Embodied is thus freed from all impressions, past and present, it is directed by devotion towards the realisation of the Super-conscious and is liberated from re-birth. Of these two Yogis, one starts to reach the goal by the shorter but more difficult route, while the other reaches the same goal by a longer but easier one. The first route is by the mental field, the second by the physical.

Sri Krishna advises his disciple to follow the easier path, so that he may with certainty become permanently merged in the sub-conscious, and through

that in the Super conscious. In view of the difficulty of keeping the mind steady and directed to one point, he is told to repeat the attempt again and again, by repeatedly abstracting it from the objects of sense, as suggested in the Hatha Yogic practices mentioned in the eighth chapter. If he is not able to carry on these practices, he should at least propitiate the Embodied Self by singing or hearing of its divine qualities, and so attaining perfection by Mantra-Yoga. If one is unable to worship the personal God, the Embodied Self, even by these means, he should at least renounce all fruits of action by controlling the self, and taking refuge in the divine qualities. Knowledge of these qualities is better than blind practice, meditation is better than knowledge, and better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruits of action, for this leads immediately to the Eternal Peace.

Methods of reaching the Impersonal (Nirguna) Brahma have now been suggested for men of every grade of mental development, but stress is laid upon the merit of renunciation, because for men who are busy with worldly existence it is not possible to practise the other methods of reaching the Supreme Eternal. Therefore all people who have to work in the world should practise this renunciation of the fruit of actions which they are bound by their daily avocations to perform. This Karma-phala-tyaga annihilates desires and helps the Embodied Self to exhaust its past impressions, especially the Prarabdha portion, *i.e.*, that portion of the past impressions which is ready for manifestation in the present life. The lack of desire prevents the impression of the sub-

conscious with the objects of desire, and no new Karma is created for future manifestation. The men of this world, with this Phala-tyaga, are liberated from re-births after the exhaustion of the Sanchit Karma.

In the next few verses the Author describes the behaviour one should adopt towards himself and others so as to achieve this renunciation of the fruits of action. He should bear no ill-will to any one, he should be friendly and compassionate to all, he should be without attachment or egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, forgiving, contented, desirous of reaching the Embodied Self, self controlled, resolute with mind and objective consciousness directed towards the Self. He should love and be lovable, free from anxiety, fear and anger. He should desire nothing, be pure in mind and body, prompt in checking desires, unconcerned with the objects of sense and untroubled by their renunciation of them. He should be above love and hate, grief or joy. He should renounce all good and evil with conscious faith in the sub-conscious self, the Embodied Super-conscious. He should be the same to friends and foes, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, and destitute of attachment. He should take equally praise or reproach, be silent, be wholly contented with what comes, be homeless, be firm in mind and full of devotion. These seekers of the Super-conscious, who regulate their actions in conformity with this wisdom, with full faith in their power of reaching the sub-conscious, ultimately reach the Supreme Goal.

CHAPTER XVIII

The varied desires by which the Embodied is impressed

(*Shraddha-traya-vibhaga*)

GITA CHAPTER XVII

The teachings of the Gita are based on the belief that the sub-conscious self has all the superior qualities attached to it from the beginning. Man has within himself all these qualities in a perfect state, and his advancement is promoted by trying not to impress imperfections upon his sub-conscious, and by bringing out by degrees in his personality all the perfect qualities which already exist within him and which are inherent powers of the sub-conscious self, the Atman. In its successive embodiments, the sub-conscious gathers round itself, in addition to its original qualities, others, good or bad, according to the impressions it receives during the periods of embodiment. These teachings form the basis of all the Hindu Scriptures. He who sets aside the ordinances of the Scriptures and acts on the impressions of his desires does not attain perfection or happiness. So Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to take the Scriptures as the authority for determining what ought or ought not to be done. Man should work in this world according to the instructions given in the Scriptures.

Arjuna next enquires about the fate of those

people who act faithfully but not in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures, and so impress the sub-conscious, without knowing of, or believing in, its divine qualities.

He has already been told that without this knowledge man is not liberated from re-birth; it follows therefore that when a man is ignorant of the divine qualities, he must continue to exist in the world of desires.

A man is by nature endowed with three kinds of ideals (Shraddha)--superior or spiritual (Sattvic), material or worldly (Rajasic), and wayward or vicious (Tamasic). These ideals are produced according to the impressions which the sub-conscious material has received in the past and which it receives in the present. The ideals of a man are his wants, desires and aims. A man is the creator of his ideals, and what he is to be is determined by those ideals. The destiny of everyone is being created hourly by himself. The influence of the past impressions on the sub-conscious material, not any external power or fate, determines what he is to create at a particular moment. Our ideals control and determine our destiny. Men with spiritual ideals stamp their sub-conscious with spiritual qualities (Devan), worldly men stamp theirs with the worldly desire for wealth and power (Yaksha-Rakshamsi), while the vicious stamp theirs with a multitude of animate and inanimate objects indiscriminately (Pretan Bhutaganan).

Men without a knowledge (Achetasha) of the ordinances mentioned in the Scriptures, given to egoism and ostentation, impelled by the force of desire

and passion, perform severe austerities not enjoined in the Scriptures, tormenting the organs of the body, together with the Embodied Self (the activities of the sub-conscious). These austerities, practised in order to obtain what is contrary to the divine nature of the sub-conscious, are full of evil (Asura-nischayan).

The Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic qualities of the mind are greatly influenced by the food taken, and also by sacrifice (Yajnya), by austerity or control (Tapas), and by gifts (Dana).

Spiritual-minded men take only delicious, bland, substantial and agreeable food to augment vitality, energy, vigour, health, joy and cheerfulness. Such a diet does not stimulate the sub-conscious activity through the gustatory nerves, which are organs of sense (Jnyanendriyas) and does not distract the mind from the object it is seeking to achieve. Such a diet, being in conformity with the divine qualities of the sub-conscious, helps spiritually minded people to attain the goal earlier. They partake of wholesome food to satisfy their hunger, without making the act of eating an absorbing object of thought.

The passionate desire food that is bitter, sour, saltish, over-hot, pungent, dry and burning, which produces pain, grief and illness. They eat, not to keep their bodies in order, but merely to satisfy their organs of sense, they eat more or less according as the qualities of the food is agreeable or disagreeable to their sense organs. This diet stimulates the activity of the sub-conscious through the nerves of taste and smell, causes irregular action of the stomach and intestines, and distracts the mind, keeping it

bound to the physical activities induced by pain, grief and sickness. Constant use of such food makes the sub-conscious easily impressionable by passionate feelings, which are discharged to activity through the objective mind.

The vicious or wayward eat food that is stale, flat, putrid and corrupt, consisting of remnants, and unclean. They take food without discrimination to satisfy the cravings of the organs of action (Karmendriyas), by doing rash, indiscriminate acts. This shows that the power of perception in these people is naturally dull or accidentally blunted, or that their mental faculties are untrained. They feel hunger and thirst and they appease them in a beast-like way; they have no true appreciation of, or appetite for, dainty food, nor of its use in moderation. All these teachings are aptly summed up in the aphorism: "Beasts feed, man eats, but only men of genius know how and what to eat."

It is to be considered an important duty not to impress the sub-conscious though one has to live among the objects of sense, for once it is impressed, its creative energy will force the individual to go round the cycle of births and re-births till the fruits of those impressions are realised.

Not to impress the sub-conscious is the best of sacrifices, but it is only possible to those Yogis who have merged the objective in the subjective.

The Author of the Gita, knowing that this sacrifice is not possible to men given to worldly pleasures, suggests that at least the impressions should be made without desire for material gain, in this way one draws nearer to the goal of self-realisation.

Impressions made contrary to his rule, with the object of gaining fruit and self-gratification, are material and bind us to worldly objects. The impressing of the sub-conscious without method (Vidhihinam), without creation of thought (*anna* is symbolically used for thought), without deliberation (Mantrahinam), without sincerity (Adakshinam), and without faith (Shraddhavirahitam) is considered vicious.

In the devotional method of impressing the mind, a certain amount of mental control is necessary. The mind must first be fixed on a desired object or idea. This is easily possible to Jnyanis who understand the proper working of the mind. Those who do not understand this working try to impress the Embodied Self unconsciously by practising certain austerities of control suggested by the Lord. These are of three kinds, pertaining to the body (Kayic), speech (Vachic) and mind (Manasic). These physical, vocal and mental austerities help an individual to steady his mind unconsciously to a point and then by meditation the sub-conscious is impressed, so that it liberates its creative energy to achieve the object.

When all the physical energy is controlled by the eight rules given by Patanjali and by various methods of Hatha Yogic practice, it is directed towards the restraining (Pujanam) of the impressions of the organs of sense (Deva), the mind (Dwija), the "great within" (Gurumahat), and the Ego (Prajnya-Ahamkara), and also towards the observance of purity, straightforwardness, continence and harmlessness; this is called austerity of the body.

It is possible, by indiscreet speech, to impress the sub-conscious with a bad idea. To prevent this,

speech should be controlled. It should be truthful, pleasant and causing no annoyance. It should be directed towards the repetition of the divine qualities of the sub-conscious (Swadhyayabhyasanam), as is done in Mantra-Yoga. Serenity of mind, kindness, silence, self-control and purity of thought (Bhavasam-suddhi) are called mental austerity, and are practised in Raja Yoga.

All these three kinds of austerity, when practised with the utmost faith and without desire for fruit, are said to be spiritual, but when they are practised with the object of gaining respect, honour and worship, or for ostentation, they are said to be material, unstable and transitory in their effects. The austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture, or for the purpose of harming others, is said to be vicious.

By Yajna and Tapas a man influences his own Embodied Self. Both require a certain amount of mental and physical control. The idea underlying them is that a man can select some impressions from his surroundings, according to his nature, and reject others which are undesirable. It presupposes a strong mind that can discriminate and then hold firmly to what is selected. Average persons are entirely under the influence of the objects that surround them and absorb impressions without discrimination. Arjuna was such a person; he had absorbed impressions with associated feelings and so had lost his mental balance on the battlefield. Such persons are weak in mind and so must be helped towards proper discrimination by gifts (Dana in the form of right thoughts, coming from one who is able to discriminate). In such a

case an outside influence acts for a time and induces the objective mind to do a discriminate action. This was done so successfully by Sri Krishna that Arjuna not only regained his discrimination, but fought the battle to a successful issue.

These gifts are in the form of right suggestions which are accepted by the weak-minded with conviction, but without any logically adequate grounds. Yajna and Tapas are processes of negative and positive forms of auto-suggestion. In Yajna. the conscious mind is trained to refuse all impressions so that they may not be carried to the sub-conscious and become realities; while Tapas makes every idea that enters the conscious mind acceptable to the sub-conscious by concentration and meditation. the idea being then transformed into reality by the sub-conscious self, and forming a permanent element in life.

When the gift of an impression is made, the objective or conscious mind is entirely ruled by the conscious mind of the impressor, which takes the place of the sub-conscious mind of the person impressed. The receiver of the suggestion then acts or behaves according to the wishes and desires of the impressor. It was the wish of Sri Krishna that Arjuna should fight on his own account in a righteous cause, and he acted in accordance with his Master's wishes.

Sri Krishna made a gift of his desires at the right time to Arjuna who thereby became fit to fight the battle. The gift of right thought, given to any one without expectation of reward, taking into consideration the suitability of the time, the fitness of the gift, and worthiness of the person, is said to be Sattvic. A gift given with a view to gaining a return

or given reluctantly is said to be material, while a gift given at an improper place or time, given contemptuously or disrespectfully or to the undeserving is said to be vicious.

The Sattvic varieties of Yajna, Tapas and Dāna are associated with the three words—Aum Tat Sat —which form the triple description of Brahman, the Super-conscious. In these words Sri Krishna gives a clue to the method of realising an object. Through this method all things in Nature were created by the Absolute, and the method is now given to man that he may realise his desires. If the knowers of Brahman and the gainers of the objects of desire performed their acts of sacrifice, austerity and gift without faith in their powers, they would not bring the Reality to themselves or to others; they would not be able to excite in themselves or in others the subjective consciousness which is necessary for reaching the Eternal, or for gaining the objects of desire. There must be the power to intensify desire into a living faith if the desire is to be achieved, and that power is centred in the utterance of the magic formula—Aum Tat Sat.

The utterance of the word 'Aum' as an incantation (Mantra) at the beginning of every act, sets up soothing vibrations, which help to calm the mind and to create an atmosphere of holiness and consecration round it. When the mind is thus made steady, that which it is desired to realise is impressed upon it by the utterance of 'Tat.' When the object of desire is thus impressed upon the mind, it excites the subjective aspect to the consciousness of that object, and liberates that desire as a gift (Dana) which becomes a reality 'Sat.'

Acts done without such faith and intensity of feeling are not real (Asat). They do not help one to gain the Eternal nor the specific objects of desire in this life or in the life to come. (*Na-cha-tat-pretya-no-iha.*)

CHAPTER XIX

Liberation of impressions to proper channels of action
(*Moksha-sannyasa-yoga*)

GITA CHAPTER XVIII

So far the teachings of the Gita have been directed towards the relinquishment of the fruit of action. To establish the importance of this truth with regard to the realisation of the Self, and to gain freedom from re-birth, the Author of the Gita now explains the origin of action, good or bad, and the theory, practice and methods of controlling it.

In the teachings of the Gita, the words Sannyasa is associated with liberation of impression on the subconscious (Karma) without eye for the result, thus taking action for granted. But Arjuna had learnt in the Smriti, that in Sannyasa, the fourth state of life which man has to reach, after passing through all the experiences of Brahmacharya, Grahasthya and Vanaprastha, he was supposed to break his relations with the external world by renouncing all actions arising from desire, and that it was in this stage that man was prepared for the realisation of the Self. As this teaching differed from what his Master has now taught him, he asks to be told the truth about Sannyasa (renunciation) and Tyaga (relinquishment).

Sri Krishna explains to him the interpretations

put on these two words by the wise. Those who know the working of the mental field (Jnyanis) interpret Sannyasa as the renunciation of all actions that spring from desire (Kamya), and the far-sighted men (Vichakshana) declare Tyaga to be the abandonment of the fruits of all action.

The real meaning of the word Sannyasa is renunciation of action, the words without desire' are merely an addition made by the Jnyanis because it is not possible to renounce all actions, mental and physical, while living in this world. Past impressions (Sanchit karma) must be liberated to free the embodied soul from the web of Karma. In complete renunciation of action in the mental field, there is no impressing of embodied self (sub-conscious), with creative energy of mind (thought), and so Kriyamana Karmas (new impressions) are brought to a standstill. But the renunciation of physical action, with the control of the mind, prevents the manifestations of all past impressions on the sub-conscious and binds the embodied soul to the body because its release is prevented by non-performance of physical action. Such a man is practically dead to his surroundings. He must be a Yogi in union with his own self, with all desire burnt out. He must be in a state of hibernation. He achieves nothing. Men aiming control of the mind (manishin) to reach the Super-conscious say that all action (mental) is evil; action involving the acts of sacrifice, austerity and gift should not be abandoned, say others.

The majority of men living in this world are of average mental development, and even if they control all their physical activities, or abandon them com-

pletely, the sowing of the seeds of impressions with the creative energy of the mind—thought—is always going on. If this sowing be done with energy, the seed is sure to spring up in the form of desire and to bear fruit in the gratification of desire which binds men to the objects of sense. In order that men might not remain so bound, though living in this world, far-sighted men have used the word 'Tyaga,' abandonment of the fruits of action. This abandonment overpowers desire, which is an outcome of impressions on the Embodied Self, and makes that Self non-impressionable, so preventing the generation of new Karma. The man then only lives to do actions which liberate those impressions from the past that are ripe for manifestation. He thus helps the Embodied Self to liberate itself from the shackles of Karma. The cause of action in this case starts from within and not from without. Action from within (Niyata Karma) is action prescribed by destiny, and relinquishment of it, on account of delusion, is said to be Tamasic. Such action should not be abandoned even if it causes fear or pain, for, if it is, the individual comes more under the influence of the senses. Such relinquishment is Rajasic in nature, and the relinquisher does not obtain the usual fruit of relinquishment—the merging of the objective in the subjective. Ordained action, done because it must be done, by relinquishing attachment and fruit, is Sattvic.

Even among those who advise Tyaga in its true sense, there are some who say that spiritual devotion (Yajna), austerities (Tapas) and gifts (Dana) which are practised for the realisation of the Self, should not be abandoned; for these acts purify the minds

of those who are trying to merge themselves into the Embodied.

An intelligent relinquisher, endowed with a knowledge of the working of the sub-conscious (Sattva-samavishtha), with doubts dispelled, does not hate disagreeable work and is not attached to agreeable work. It is not possible for a man living in a physical body to relinquish action completely, for he has to carry out his fully ripened Karma, but he who relinquishes the fruit of action is called a Tyagi.

Those who do not relinquish the fruit of actions naturally expect something in return for their actions, and that return will be good or bad in the life to come according to the impressions they have made on the sub-conscious with the intention of getting a result.

Whatever action a man does, by means of his body, speech or mind, is the outcome of the five causes as declared in the Samkhya philosophy (a system based on the knowledge of the working of the body and the mind). These are the body (Adhishthana), the conscious mind as the doer (Karta), the various organs of sense (Karana), their manifold actions, and destiny (impressions of past lives). That being so, he who, owing to lack of understanding, looks upon his physical self as the absolute doer, does not see the real doer of the action.

"He who is free from egoism, whose conscious mind is not affected from without, but who takes his inspiration for action from within, though he slays the fighters here assembled, does not slay (the real fighters in them) nor is he bound by action."

Impellors and Regulators of Action
(*Karma-chodana and Karma-Sangraha*)

Physical activity cannot start of itself, there must be a visible or invisible cause behind it. The causes that lead to action and that regulate it are now described. The knowledge of the means (Jnyana) by which the object is achieved, the thing to be known (Jnyeyam), which is the object to be gained, and the knower, the sub-conscious (Jnyata) on which the idea is impressed—these three are the impellors of action (Karma-chodana); they do not take any active part in the performance of it. The implement of achievement (Karana), the visible manifestation of the impression (Karma), and the conscious activity of the objective mind (Karta), are the three regulators of action (Karma-sangraha). Jnyana, Jnyeyam and Pari-jnyata are terms relating to sub-conscious activity, and information about them is given in the 18th verse of the thirteenth chapter. Karana, Karma and Karta relate to conscious activity. The sub-conscious activity supplies the necessary force to the conscious to give expression to the ideas which occur there.

The classical example of the potter is given to explain these conscious and unconscious activities. The idea comes to the sub-conscious mind of the potter .(Jnyata) to create a pot (Jnyeyam), he then thinks of the means by which it can be done (Jnyana); when these impressions are clearly fixed in the sub-conscious, they are transferred to the conscious mind (Karta) which looks for the necessary instruments—clay, wheel, etc., (Karana),—by the help of which a pot is produced (Karma).

From the emotional point of view it can be said that knowledge of the impressions on the sub-conscious excites the conscious mind to regulate the physical actions to gain the result of impressions.

Of these impellors and regulators, only knowledge, action and the conscious mind are associated with the three qualities, spiritual, material and vicious, mentioned in the Samkhya philosophy.

The knowledge by which one imperishable being (the sub-conscious self) is seen in all beings, inseparable in the separated, is spiritual; that which sees the sub-conscious as a separate entity in each being is material; while the knowledge which is devoid of reason, narrow and contrary to the ordinances of the Scriptures, thinks of the motive as the whole to be achieved, and is therefore said to be vicious or wayward.

An ordained action done without love, hate or attachment by one not desirous of fruit is spiritual (Sattvic), the action done with the desire for fruit, or from self-conceit, or with much effort is said to be material (Rajasic). An action undertaken from delusion, without regard to one's capacity or with loss to one's physical self, or injury to others, is said to be vicious (Tamasic).

The actor who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with fortitude and confidence, unaffected by success or failure, is spiritual; he who is passionate, desirous of fruits of action, greedy, impure, harmful, moved by joy and sorrow, is material; while he who is discordant, vulgar, stubborn, dishonest, malicious, indolent, despondent and procrastinating, is vicious.

THE EXECUTORS OF ACTION
(*Buddhi-Dhriti-Sukha*)

After speaking of the nature of knowledge, action and the actor, the Author of the Gita proceeds to give the divisions of the conscious or objective mind, and of fortitude. He has isolated the conscious mind and fortitude from knowledge, action and actor, and mentions their qualities separately. The regulators of action are dependent for their activity on the sub-conscious and its impressions. These have a continuity in them, but this continuity can be interfered with by the conscious or reasoning mind, and by lack of courage. These two may prevent the regulators of action from bringing about a result. These exist for one life only and vary in successive lives; they are changeable even in the same life according to the experience an individual gains as his life progresses. Buddhi and Dhriti in childhood are not the same as they are in manhood, and these again are not the same in old age. There may be a sufficient concord between the impellors and regulators of action to produce a result, but that result may fail of achievement through lack of will (Buddhi), and even if there be will enough, a man may lack grit (Dhriti) and then the result is not attained. So, without these two there can be no manifestation. Courage and will, if rightly directed, are calculated to infuse a man with energy and power to attain the object of his desire.

Sri Krishna, knowing that Arjuna, though now thoroughly conversant with the working of the mind, in theory and practice, may yet be prevented from fighting by his conscious mind, as well as by lack of

courage, brings these two things to his notice, and tells of their qualities so that he may choose the proper aspect of them and then engage in righteous battle.

The consciousness that understands action and inaction, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, emancipation and bondage, is Sattvic; that which knows what is right and what is wrong, though not understanding the true reasons, and knows also proper and improper action, is Rajasic while the Tamasic consciousness regards wrong as right and looks at all things from a perverted angle of vision.

The fortitude which controls the functions of the mind, the life energies and the organs of sense by faithfully directing the objective consciousness to the divine qualities of the sub-conscious, is spiritual; that which directs the objective consciousness to attachment, desire of fruit and the gaining of wealth and desires is material; vicious fortitude does not rouse a man from lethargy to activity and is given up to fear, grief, despair and vanity.

Sri Krishna well knew the working of the average human mind and he did not wish to leave any weak spot in Arjuna's mental state which might give him a chance to say that he was still not inclined to fight. He wanted Arjuna to discharge his destined action so that he might the sooner be free from bondage. He had spoken to him of the qualities of Buddhi, so that he might bring the material aspects of it into the forefront of his consciousness, but something more was needed to produce action than the mere bringing into play of Rajasic qualities, and that some-

thing was fortitude, the proper quality of the normal mind. The knowledge of an object starts desire for action by exciting the actor through his objective consciousness, but if the actor has not sufficient courage, he may not take the opportunity for action, and so may fail to achieve his object through lethargy, fear, grief, despair or vanity,—all causes that lead to inactivity.

Arjuna had been inactive on account of grief and dejection,—not on account of any defect in his courage. The defect was at the very source of action—his objective consciousness refused to be influenced by the creative energy of the sub-conscious. His Master, realising that although Arjuna has all the knowledge and practice of the working of the mind, yet, if he does not summon sufficient courage, he may be unable to put his teachings into effect, brings to his mind the qualities of that vicious fortitude that prevents action.

There was yet another excuse that Arjuna had put forward—that he did not want any happiness or good fortune that came to him through killing his cousins and kinsmen. He was not willing to do such wickedness even if it brought him dominion over the three worlds, still less for any earthly kingdom. Sri Krishna, realising that this objection to killing his relations and friends might shake his firmness and make him inactive, explains to him the three qualities of happiness, so that he may choose the one which will lead him to accomplish his object.

The happiness derived from the practice of merging the objective with the subjective brings to an

end all pain, and the gaining of such happiness is like poison at first but like nectar in the end. It is spiritual, born of the blissful knowledge of the Embodied Self. The happiness which comes from uniting the objective consciousness with the objects of sense is like nectar at first, but in the end like poison, and is material. Vicious happiness begins and ends in the delusion of self, and arises from sleep, indolence and misapprehension.

In these three qualities, Buddhi, Dhriti and Sukha (happiness), the Sattvic aspect of each takes one nearer to the Eternal Bliss, while the Rajasic and Tamasic aspects bind one to worldly objects and the organs of sense. Arjuna, a Kshattriya, who has determined not to fight, might easily put forward the plea that, if Sattvic qualities lead one to earlier liberation from re-birth, it would be worth while to gain those qualities by controlling one's mental and physicab activities and directing the energy thus gained towards the realisation of the qualities of the Embodied Self. Sri Krishna explains to his pupil the duties which the different classes of men have to perform, in the performance of which they reach their highest perfection. The duties of Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras correspond to the qualities born of their own nature (Swabhava) that is to the impressions they have made on the sub-conscious during their past lives.

When these impressions have had the characteristics of serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge, wisdom and belief in the hereafter, the individual becomes a Brahmin, and is supposed to live a life of Sattvic qualities.

If the impressions have been of the nature of boldness, prowess, fortitude, dexterity, not fleeing from battle, generosity and sovereignty, the individual becomes a Kshattriya. Those who are Vaishyas in the present life have had their sub-conscious impressed with the ideas of agriculture, rearing cows and trade, while Sudras have the quality of service.

Perfection can be reached by all men in their respective classes. Those who perform the duties determined by the class in which they are born can reach the desired perfection by performing those duties (Swakarma) devoutly and perfectly.

The word 'Swakarma' can be interpreted in two ways—the behaviour of the individual towards the external objects of sense, or the behaviour of the Embodied Self towards his physical self. According to the first interpretation, Swakarma may be good or bad or done with desire, and so will not carry a man to perfection. But if Swakarma be taken to mean the Karma of the Embodied Self, which has all the divine qualities, then by taking them as guides, and performing the duties of one's own class, one is led to perfection. So the way of perfection lies in impressing that sub-conscious self which actuates all beings and pervades the whole body, with qualities akin to its nature, while doing one's duty.

The four classes with their duties are related to the external world, and the various physical manifestations are grouped together according to the nature of their work. The relation of each of them to its own Self is described in the interpretation of the 13th verse of the Fourth Chapter (*vide* pp. 70-71).

The ultimate end of the teachings of the Gita

is the realisation of the Self, and the attainment of Eternal Bliss. To this end a man must act in conformity with the divine qualities—that is, he must be Sattvic in all his acts, mental and physical. The Sattvic qualities are possessed only by Brahmins, they can reach the Eternal Bliss earlier than the Kshattriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras who are far below them in mental development. It seems then as if the simplest way for all these classes would be to abandon all their special vocations and take to the Brahmanic duties of worshipping the sub-conscious by directing the objective consciousness to it, and withdrawing it from the objects of sense. Sri Krishna anticipated that Arjuna might take this view and give up his duties as a Kshattriya, so he warns him that one's own duty, though destitute of merit, is better than the well-performed duty of another. He who does his duty in conformity with the divine nature of the sub-conscious (Swabhava Niyata) incurs no sin. The action arising out of past impressions (Sahajam Karma), however bad it may be, should not be abandoned, for the generator of all actions (Sarvarambhah) is also enveloped in bad impressions as is fire by smoke. He does not wish Arjuna to change his vocation in order to dedicate himself to the Supreme, but to do his duty in that vocation, without allowing his consciousness to be attached to the objects of sense, and with the sub-conscious subdued, so that it does not receive any impressions that produce desire. By thus doing one's duty one ultimately reaches the stage of complete renunciation and attains the supreme perfection wherein the Embodied is completely freed

from impressions (Nishkarma-Siddhi). This perfection leads to realisation of the Universal Brahma.

This last step, the supreme consummation of knowledge, is now explained.

The method of merging the objective in the subjective varies according to the spiritual, material and vicious types of men. He who has purified his conscious mind so as to unite it with the sub-conscious by controlling the physical self with courage, persistently following the methods suggested in the sixth chapter, after abandoning sound and all other objects of sense, and desisting from passion and malice, becomes one with the Eternal. He neither grieves nor desires. He sees the sameness of the Embodied Self everywhere and is devotedly attached to it. Such a spiritual man, when he is in this state of supreme devotion (Bhakti) to the sub-conscious, gains consciousness of its reality and nature and forthwith merges into that Supreme Consciousness of which the sub-conscious in all beings is a spark.

This devotional method of reaching the Eternal is for those Jnyana Yogis who have controlled their mind, knowing its working, and believing in the existence of the Supreme Eternal. They continue their physical existence only to exhaust the past impressions (Sanchit) and to liberate the Embodied Soul from successive re-births.

There is another class of Yogis, who, taking refuge in dispassion, fix their minds on one point to the exclusion of all others (Dhyana-yoga-para) dwelling in solitude, eating little, and controlling the speech, the body and the mind. The point of concentration may be an object of desire, which will liberate him

from or bind him to the world of desire. He should concentrate on a point, by casting aside egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger and covetousness. A man who does this, freed from the notion of "I and mine," and tranquil in mind, becomes fit for the Eternal (*Brahma bhuyaya kalpate*).

A Dhyana Yogi, desirous of gaining the fruit of his action, impresses his sub-conscious with determination (Chetasa), knowing it to be the real source of achievement of the objects of desire. Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to impress his sub-conscious with the intense desire to win the battle and then to realise the fruits of action through the objective consciousness. The sub-conscious, thus impressed, will enable him to overcome all obstacles.

When a man impresses (Dharana), concentrates (Dhyana), and meditates (Samadhi) on the sub-conscious, that is when he makes Samyamana on the Embodied Self, he gets inspiration to do the right act even in difficulties, that is, he is guided by his inner self. If from self-conceit (Mada) a man will not listen to advice from within, he is utterly ruined. He behaves and acts in a Tamasic way. Sri Krishna purposely brought this idea of self-conceit to the notice of his disciple for he knew that Arjuna was determined not to fight. The knowledge imparted to him in the teachings of the Gita had made him regain the full and proper working of the mind; enough courage had been infused into him to go through the battle, but if in spite of all, he persisted in maintaining his determination not to act, simply through self-conceit, the object of the teaching would not be attained. Sri Krishna told him that to resolve not to

fight would be useless. "Your duty coming to you as impressions from your past lives will force you to fight." This unfathomable creative force (Maya) of the sub-conscious self is so powerful that it causes all things to revolve, like clay on a potter's wheel. He advises Arjuna to take shelter in Him, the Embodied, with full trust (Sarva-Bhavena), and by His grace he will attain the Supreme Peace, the Everlasting Abode.

Release of Action
(*Sannyasa*)

This knowledge about the working of the mind, more secret than any secrecy, was declared to Arjuna, and to all men, by Sri Krishna. Having reflected on it carefully, one should act as it directs. Even though the secret be declared, it is of no value for personal gain, either spiritual or material, unless a man knows the way to use it. The object of the teachings of the Gita is not the material realisation of an object of desire, that binds one to worldly life and makes one go through the cycle of re-births perpetually. The aim of the teachings is to put a stop to this, which can only be done by directing the working of the mental field towards the higher cosmic vibrations with their divine qualities, which are associated with the Super-conscious when it is embodied as the sub-conscious self.

The most secret knowledge of the methods by which one can impress the sub-conscious material in order to obtain the object of desire, whether spiritual or material, has already been imparted in the twelfth chapter. Sri Krishna now once more reminds Arjuna of it to impress it more firmly on his mind. "Direct

the mind to the Embodied Super-conscious, be devoted to it, worship it with sacrifice (of all outside impressions) and be submissive to its influence. By this way alone can one become conscious of His existence.' To obtain this knowledge of the Super-conscious which is necessary for final emancipation, Sri Krishna tells his disciple to abandon all other objects of worship (Dharma) and merge his objective consciousness into the subjective which will liberate him from all sin, and will not allow himself to be overcome with grief. Arjuna's mind was fixed too much on his relatives and cousins, and this was a hint to him to withdraw his objective consciousness from these objects of sense and embodied emotions and to direct it towards his sub-conscious mind. This process of impressing the sub-conscious in order to realise the Eternal is not meant for those who have not controlled their physical activity by practising austerity, even while practising austerity they must believe in the existence of the sub-conscious self and its divine nature. Furthermore, they must believe what is told them, without any suspicion of the one who imparts the knowledge. Sri Krishna was afraid that, in spite of all his teachings, Arjuna might not adopt the suggestion made to him in order to establish the connection between the objective and the subjective mind. In order to adopt a suggestion, a man must pay concentrated attention to what is said to him, and must also have implicit faith in the one who makes the suggestion. Arjuna had that faith in his Master as he stated at the end of the eleventh chapter; what Sri Krishna now wants to find out is whether he has given proper attention to the teachings; so he asks him whether

he has listened with undivided attention, and whether his delusion is destroyed, and is satisfied when Arjuna answers: "O Achyuta (unshakable), my delusion of mind which prevented me from discerning the truth is gone. I have regained my memory through Thy grace. I am firm; my doubts are dispelled, I will do Thy word."

This is the end of the discourse between Arjuna and his Master. The advice as to what he ought to do had been given in the early chapters, but it was ignored as he was under the sway of his objective consciousness. The "Great Within" is now awakened, and he sees the absurdity of his egoism; he now knows that the destined action must be liberated regardless of the consequences, if he is to be freed from the cycle of re-birth. He might have said, "I will now fight the battle and kill my cousins—the enemy," but he only says, "I will do as you advise me to do." (*Karishye vachanam tava*).

There was still one point on which Arjuna needed the guidance of his Master. He did not know what would be the final result of the battle, and wanted to know what he should do. Karma Sannyasa and Karma Yoga have both been advocated by him for the realisation of the Self, but the methods differ, according to the knowledge and wisdom of the physical self and the working of the mind.

A Karma Sannyasin, who is conversant with the working of the mind, renounces the world to obtain that realisation, while a Karma Yogi, who is attached to this world, carries on his usual avocations and yet tries to reach the final goal.

Karma Sannyasa and Karma Yoga can both be

either mental or physical. The quality of each will vary according as either or both of them are worked simultaneously or separately. The renunciation of action (Karma) in the mental method is the prevention of all outside impressions on the sub-conscious self. This prevents the generation of new Karma. The renunciation of impressions of the sub-conscious to the physical activity destroys all past Karma (Sanchit) by liberating to its manifestation and realisation.

The simultaneously renunciation of all mental and physical activities is only possible to those spiritual (Sattvic) people who have merged themselves in the subjective consciousness. Arjuna has not yet reached that stage, and therefore could not be advised to adopt that method.

The renunciation of mental activity while physical activity continues, prevents accumulation of new Karma and liberates the Embodied from the past, when it is exhausted. A man thus becomes ultimately fit for emancipation. This is the Rajasic emancipation. In the third variety of Karma Sannyasa, the physical activity is renounced, while the mental activity goes on. This is practised only by persons of Tamasic nature.

None of these varieties of Karma Sannyasa was suitable for Arjuna, not even the Rajasic, for in all varieties of Sannyasa the physical activity is only related to one's self. In Rajasic Sannyasa, the physical activity in the form of austerity is performed only for the purification of the mind. Arjuna, a man living in the world of desire, could not become a Karma Sannyasin, because he had relations with the world outside. The physical activity ordained by his

past impressions was for the realisation of desire, *viz.*, winning the battle and regaining the kingdom which rightly belonged to him and his brothers. For people of this kind, who live for the sake of obtaining objects of desire, the practice of Karma Yoga is possible.

The simultaneous activity of mind and body in a Karma Yogi enables him to generate and liberate new and old Karma, and binds him to re-birth, when practised without discrimination by a man of Tamasic nature. If the same Karma Yoga is performed with discrimination, without caring for the fruit of action, it becomes Sattvic. If mental activity is checked and physical activity is allowed to go on, the generation of new Karma comes to an end, just as it does in Rajasic Karma Sannyasa, but physical activity is not used as in the latter for the sake of the self, but is liberated in the outside world, to free the sub-conscious from past impressions. This is known as the Rajasic Karma Yoga. There is another variety of Karma Yoga in which mental activity goes on and physical activity is temporarily checked. An effort is thus made to destroy the fully ripened past impressions which are ready for manifestation (Prarabdha), but the accumulation of new Karma (Kriyamana) goes on increasing. Such a man may appear for a time to be a Yogi, but this hypocrisy will be exposed when the sub-conscious material is saturated with Sanchit. Its creative energy will force him to discharge his Prarabdha to unload his burden. Such a Yogi becomes Yogabhrashta.

Of all these varieties, Sri Krishna advises Arjuna, as a man of the world, to follow the Rajasic Karma Yoga, which not only helps a man to obtain the

objects of desire by liberating the Prarabdha, which is intuitively toned down by the divine qualities of the sub-conscious, but at the same time, because the mind is controlled, prevents the generation of new Karma. When the Prarabdha is exhausted the man becomes fit to reach the Eternal (*Brahma bhuyaya kalpate*). In this way Karma Yoga is superior to Karma Sannyasa for men who must carry on their avocations and duties.

This truth had been repeatedly suggested to Arjuna in order to make him active on the battlefield. His Master now impresses it on him again and advises him to be a Karma Yogi, with his mind controlled (*Mam-anusa-rayudhyacha* VII, 7). (*Tasmat-yogi-bhava Arjuna* VI, 46). (*Tasmat-yogaya-ujyasva* II. 50). (*Kuru-karmaiva* IV, 85.)

Adopting these suggestions as coming from one who was superior to him in knowledge, capacity and reasoning power, Arjuna pulls himself together, takes up the bow which had fallen from his hands, dashes forward and fights the battle to a successful termination.

In the foregoing pages, which represent an earnest endeavour to make the doctrine of the Gita easy to understand, I have departed from the traditional interpretations given by competent teachers, both saints and savants. I have reason to believe that many hitherto unexplained problems will become more easily intelligible in the light of these interpretations and that many previously unintelligible verses and doctrines become more easy of explanation on the physical and psychical planes of being. My success

in this endeavour can be gauged by the enlightened readers. I can only lay before them what I have been inspired to write. This book is an endeavour to liberate my individual soul from past actions. In this way, I bring my own convictions to bear upon the so-called mystical song of Sri Krishna, the perfect and complete incarnation of God. Therefore with a devout heart I give to the world this "Exposition of the Bhagwad-Gita" and dedicate it to Brahma, with the utterance of the monosyllabic OM, who pervades the Cosmos and yet is infinitesimal, and who is the all-enveloping transcendental Beatitude, Sat-Chit-Ananda.

BRAHMARPANAM

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